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**Town of Shandaken
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
May 13, 2024**

Meeting was called to order with the pledge of allegiance at 6:12pm; members present

Mary Herrmann	Present
Vivian Welton	Present
Mark Loete	Present
Allen Vella	Present
Kevin VanBlarcum	Present
MJ Reiss	Present
Roy Dignes	Present
Grace Grant	Present

Minutes

March minutes should be corrected to show that Roy Dignes was not in attendance; motion to approve last months minutes with the correction by Allen Vella, seconded by Kevin VanBlarcum; all in favor.

New Business

Hilary Smith and Leah Perloff have both resigned from the committee.

The Town of Shandaken was awarded the Patterns for Progress grant in the amount of \$80,000 for the comprehensive plan. The money will be used to fire Patterns for Progress to consult with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, working toward the goal of a fully updated Comprehensive Plan.

Old Business

Mary Herrmann sent the "revised" plan that includes all the updates that the committee has made over these last months to the members earlier this month (a copy of the revised plan has been made a part of these minutes.)

Certain sections pertaining to housing and population cannot be updated at this time. Those sections will be removed from the document until the information can be updated; all members in agreement.

Items highlighted in red will be removed from the document; all members in agreement.

Page 16 regarding Phoenicia Septic should be removed; all members in agreement.

Subheadings in “B. Visions and Goals” will be changed from letters to numbers; all members in agreement.

Highlighted sections from page 17 as well as the paragraph following them will be removed; all members in agreement.

Highlighted section on page 5 will be updated; all members in agreement.

Highlighted section on page 26 will be changed to seasonal workers; all members in agreement.

Page 26 under Modifications to Development/Site Plan Regulations....should read:

“Existing zoning and land use regulations should be modified to reflect the recommended actions in the Comprehensive Plan and to encourage the desired development types, locations, and characteristics. It is not the intent to increase zoning densities, however the Town needs to evaluate the issue of density going forward.:

All members in agreement

Remove “all” from page 28 1a; all members in agreement.

All sections that refer to the “Catskill Interpretive Center” should be changed to “Catskill Visitors Center;” all members in agreement.

All members agree that the corrected “revised” document will be forwarded to the Planning Board for their comments.

Adjournment

Motion to close the meeting was made by Kevin VanBlarcum; seconded by Vivian Welton; all in favor.

Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Shandaken, NY

Updated and recommended by the
Town of Shandaken
Comprehensive Plan Committee
May 2024



Shandaken Town Board

Peter DeSclafani- Town Supervisor

Kyle R. Steen - Town Board Member

Elizabeth Kneissl - Town Board Member

Robert Drake - Town Board Member

Kevin Van Blarcum - Town Board Member

2023 Comprehensive Plan Committee

Mary Herrmann - Chair

Leah Perloff-Co Chair

Grace Grant - Secretary

Vivian Welton – Planning Board

Mark Loete -Zoning Board of Appeals

Allen Vella- Zoning Board of Appeals

Kevin Van Blarcum- Town Board Member

MJ Reiss

Hilary Smith

Roy Dignes

TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. SHANDAKEN HISTORY	
A. Natural Setting	2
B. Early History	2
C. Major Events	4
II. SHANDAKEN TODAY	
A. Population and Housing	6
B. Land Use & Development Limitations	8
C. Economy & Tourism	9
D. Historic Resources	10
E. Infrastructure	11
F. Community Services and Facilities	12
G. Natural Features	14
H. Other Significant Issues	14
III. SHANDAKEN TOMORROW	
A. Future Needs	15
1) Population and Housing	
2) Land Use and Development	
3) Infrastructure	
4) Community Services	
B. Vision & Goals	16
IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
A. Natural, Historic & Cultural Features and Resources	20
B. Economic Development	20
C. Development Patterns	22
D. Infrastructure	24
E. Regionalism and Partnerships	30
F. Public Education and Outreach	31
V. NEXT STEPS	
A. Follow-Up Plans	31
B. Priorities	32
C. Funding Opportunities	32
Figures 1-3	33

INTRODUCTION

New York State Town Law (§272-a) authorizes preparation of a master (or comprehensive) plan by a town and sets forth the procedures to be followed. The law includes a statement of "legislative findings and intent" that emphasizes the importance of the planning process to the health, safety, and general welfare of town residents and the essential need for open citizen participation in the design of the comprehensive plan.

The law goes on to define the comprehensive plan as follows:

"Town Comprehensive Plan" means the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports, and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices, and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city."

This plan for the Town of Shandaken recognizes that future actions in the town are dependent on a variety of factors and interrelated decisions by both government agencies and private property owners, including many that cannot be predicted in advance. Therefore, the plan is designed as a policy document that sets forth goals and objectives for the town's future, which can be used to evaluate future proposals for actions by public and private entities. The plan will serve as a guide for decision makers and a statement of the town's policies for its future.

Most rural communities, like the Town of Shandaken, were originally established without comprehensive plans, review boards, or regulatory controls. The historic hamlets and natural features, which shaped growth and rural roads, remain from the era of initial development, and combine to create a picturesque environment that has formed the basis for a long-standing tourist-based economy.

By carefully examining current conditions and issues in the context of citizen involvement, a community can prepare a comprehensive plan to guide its future. The plan should establish community goals and include recommendations intended to preserve the environment, while supporting growth that is compatible with community standards.

The TOS adopted their first Comprehensive Plan in 2008. Previously, the town had enacted land use regulations to guide development, including the subdivision regulations approved in 1971, the town's first Zoning Law enacted in 1976 and substantially revised and amended in 1987. This law delineates eight zoning districts and provides standards for development in each district.

To be comprehensive, the plan should address Shandaken's history, the town's current conditions and opportunities, the town's needs for the future, and goals and future actions to ultimately achieve the vision for our community.

I. SHANDAKEN HISTORY

A Natural Setting

The Town of Shandaken resides in the heart of the Catskill Mountains, which are located approximately 100 miles northwest of New York City. Encompassing four counties and over 6,000 square miles of mountains, forests, rivers, and farmland, the Catskills are often referred to as America's First Wilderness because scholars trace the beginnings of the environmental conservation movement to this beautiful area. With almost three dozen mountain peaks over 3,500 feet in elevation and six major river systems, the Catskills are an ecological resource of significant importance.

The Central Catskill region spans a natural system of valleys, which traverse the mountains following the upper reaches of the Esopus Creek and the East Branch of the Delaware River. The Town of Shandaken consists of approximately 79,200 acres and 110.82 miles of highways. The town has distinctive characteristics and historical significance surrounding its unique twelve hamlets of Woodland Valley, Olivera, Chichester, Bushnellsville, Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Tremper, Phoenicia, Shandaken, Allaben, Big Indian, Pine Hill and Highmount.

Generally, the mountains consist of steep wooded slopes, and in some locations, show a terrace pattern, reflective of weathering difference in the conglomerate, sandstone, and shale beds that underlie the Catskills. Steep mountain runs convey water from the shallow hillside soils into larger creeks such as the Esopus that can change in character from a quiet flowing stream to a raging torrent with an afternoon thunderstorm.

B. Early History

The valleys of the Central Catskills made natural travel routes for both Indians and colonial Europeans. This access, both to the Catskills area and beyond, has had a profound effect upon the region's history. During pre-European times, much of the Central Catskills were inhabited by the Minsi subgroup of the Lenni-Lenape people, who were also referred to as the "Delaware" people by the British.

One major Minsi settlement, a "principal fire" known as Pakatakan, existed near present-day Margaretville just west of Shandaken. By the time Dutch settlers from Hurley explored new lands near the Pakatakan settlement in 1762, out-migration and the introduction of European diseases had decimated the Minsi population. During the colonial era, the Central Catskills were part of the Hardenbergh Patent, in which ownership was mostly in the hands of the Livingston family by the Revolutionary War. The Town of Shandaken was part of Woodstock until 1804. Settlers fleeing the stony soils of Connecticut joined immigrants from other states and foreign shores in exploring the region west of the Hudson in the hopes of locating arable farmland. Settlers in the valleys of the Central Catskills soon learned to use the natural resources of the mountains to supplement their attempts at farming, and small sawmills and tanneries sprouted across the landscape. The military demand for leather goods during the War of 1812 spurred the development of large-scale industrial tanneries, which not only decimated the small handcrafters, but also much of the extensive hemlock forests in the Catskills.

In the 19th Century, tanning and other industries of the Central Catskills became profitable due to transportation improvements and innovations. The Hudson River was opened to competition amongst steamboats, resulting in shorter travel times between New York City and river ports, such as Rondout (now part of Kingston) and the Catskills. Turnpikes were chartered and constructed to provide access to resource-rich hinterlands.

Horse-drawn wagons full of lumber, furniture, hides or bluestone, another developing industry, shared the turnpike with stage coaches that brought mail and visitors to the region, including sportsmen to hunt and fish from the natural bounty of wildlife that was present. Many settlers along the turnpike route had rooms for rent in their homes, or built boarding houses, to provide lodging for the team drivers, as a trip in a fully-loaded wagon between Shandaken hamlet and Kingston took three days.

Construction of the Rondout & Oswego Railroad (later the Ulster & Delaware) provided a new, more efficient means of transportation for both freight and passenger traffic. The R & O reached Shandaken hamlet in 1870. Following its reorganization as the Ulster & Delaware Railroad in 1875, it began to promote the Central Catskills as a tourist destination. A great wave of resort hotel construction followed until the turn of the century. Pine Hill was one of the focal points, with 20 such facilities, including the Grand Hotel built on the Delaware County Line.

The 418-room Grand Hotel (1881-1966) Highmount, N.Y., opened in 1881 by the Ulster & Delaware Railroad, sat on the side of Monka Hill, with a commanding view down the Big Indian Valley towards Slide Mountain. The hotel was a copy of the famous Oriental Hotel on Coney Island in New York City. Because of its affiliation with the railroad, it remained in operation until 1966, long after the other great hotels of its era had closed.

The natural beauty and resources of the Central Catskills, including and surrounding Shandaken, influenced two major movements with effects far beyond the Catskills. An unknown painter named Thomas Cole first visited the Catskills in 1825. He soon was creating landscape paintings, which were tremendously popular and produced numerous followers, known as the Hudson River School. The paintings also helped to promote interest in the Catskill Mountains and the development of resorts and retreats from which their beauty could be appreciated. In the second half of the 19th century, John Burroughs, a native of nearby Roxbury in Delaware County, raised the public consciousness about the value and beauty of the natural environment. His writings were based on his experiences in the Catskills and formed the genesis of the environmental movement, which continues to this day.

Following the turn of the century and more so after World War I, the demographics, which had supported the hotel industry, had changed. The automobile and the modern highway system curtailed demand on passenger railroads. The Ulster & Delaware Railroad's passenger traffic peaked at 676,000 in 1913 and declined afterwards. Ski trains were run to Simpson's Slope, which opened in 1935 in Phoenicia for a time, but passenger service was discontinued in 1955. Air-conditioning and convenient air travel further reduced the number of people who had been coming to the Catskills for vacations and to beat the summer heat of the city. However, winter visitors somewhat offset those declining numbers. The ski industry in the Catskills developed in response to growing demand for year-round outdoor recreational opportunities. Highmount Ski area was started in 1946, and in 1949, New York State built Belleayre Ski Center. Hunting and fishing, which had suffered due to environmental degradation by the tanneries and quarries, were on the rebound.

C. Major Events

Several major events have shaped the Central Catskills and the Town of Shandaken over the past century.

1. Catskill Forest Preserve and the Catskill Park

The justification for creating the Forest Preserve was to protect water resources and open space, and to provide opportunity for recreational uses (Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan, 1999). The first trail was built in 1892 to the summit of Slide Mountain, the highest peak in the Catskills at 4,180 feet.

The Catskill Park was established by the New York State Legislature in 1904 and encompasses an area of Delaware, Greene, Sullivan, and Ulster counties in which state-owned or acquired lands were classified as forever-wild Forest Preserve. The Catskill Park is a checkerboard of public and privately owned lands. While the percentages change when the state acquires new land, the ratio of private-to-public is about two to one. The state owns over one-third of the land within the park boundaries, and the balance is privately owned. These state-owned lands within the "blue line" boundary of the Catskill Park are designated as the Catskill Forest Preserve, and the New York State Constitution requires that these lands be "forever kept as wild forest."

Over the century, since it was first established, the Catskill Forest Preserve has grown from its original 33,894 acres to its current total of 279,000 acres and now constitutes over 40% of the total area of the Catskill Park. The Forest Preserve encompasses the highest mountains in the Catskills, including many of the 35 peaks over 3,500 feet in elevation. The State of New York continues to acquire land within the Catskill Park to add to its Forest Preserve holdings, with the goal of preserving lands of critical ecological importance to the Catskill Mountain region. Today, there are over 700,000 acres of parkland contained in Catskill Park.

2. New York City Watershed

Pressure to satisfy the needs of New York City for a safe and sufficient water supply increased after the droughts in 1895 and 1896. Various alternatives to provide new water supply sources were investigated over the next 10 years, culminating in 1905 when the New York State Legislature approved creation of the New York City Board of Water Supply with powers to establish reservoirs and regulate the watershed in the Catskill Mountains. The 1909 plan for the construction of the world's greatest aqueduct system is shown to the right. This system now includes six reservoirs and a regulated watershed of over 1,600 square miles. In response to new federal standards for public water supplies, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued new draft watershed regulations in September 1990. The 35 communities in the Catskill watershed organized the Coalition of Watershed Towns to respond to the regulations which they believed would have major impacts on the economy of the region. After long negotiations in 1997, an agreement was reached on a Watershed Protection Plan to maintain and enhance the quality of the city's drinking water supply, while protecting the economic vitality and social character of watershed communities.

3. Belleayre Ski Center

Creation of the Catskill Park was followed by acquisition of land, much of it on sensitive and remote mountaintops, to preserve it as "forever wild." In November 1947, the people of New York voted and approved the creation of Belleayre Ski Center by amending the New York State Constitution to allow

for construction of a ski center on Belleayre Mountain in Ulster County. In 1949, New York State began construction of the Belleayre Ski Center in Highmount.

Originally operated by NYSDEC, the management of the Belleayre Ski Center and the Pine Hill Lake Day Use Area was transferred to the Olympic Regional Development Agency in 2012. The Ski Center and Day Use Area now comprise one of the major tourist destinations in the region, which accommodated 175,000 skiers in 2002, approximately 165,000 skiers in 2003 and generates patrons for many of the region's tourism-based businesses. Recent investments to improve physical facilities and marketing at Belleayre has demonstrated the state's long-term commitment to maintaining this major resource. Every ten years, Belleayre Ski Center is required to draft a new Unit Management Plan that identifies future development and capital improvement projects. In addition, in keeping with the Catskill State Park Master Plan, future construction and/or expansion of facilities on State-owned land must be considered in the context of the Unit Management Plan, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the public hearing process.

4. Realignment of Route 28

Route 28 was always the main artery through the valley, running through virtually every hamlet. In the 1960's, Route 28 was rebuilt and realigned to bypass many of the hamlets. This new alignment allowed automobile traffic to travel through the heart of the Catskills more quickly, but also affected auto-dependent businesses on the hamlet main streets and encouraged new business activity along the new route. More recently, revitalization efforts in the larger hamlets, particularly Phoenicia and Pine Hill, have benefited to some extent by the absence of through traffic.

II. SHANDAKEN TODAY

This section highlights the conditions of the community today related to population and housing, land use and development limitations, economy and tourism, historic resources, infrastructure, community services and natural features.

A. Population and Housing

A review of population and housing characteristics in Shandaken provides insight into the evolving demographics of the community. A detailed demographic assessment was undertaken with the previous draft plans. This section will highlight some of the trends.

A more current population number for Shandaken was reported by the American Community Survey in 2022 at 2925 residents. It is presented in the table below. The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people. The ASC is a branch of the US Census.

The population of Shandaken was 2866 as reported by the 2020 and 3085 in 2010. According to the 2000 Census data, the population in Shandaken in the year 2000 3,235 was residents and at that exceeded the population in 1900 for the first time in 100 years. From a peak of 3,053 in 1900, population declined steadily to a low of 1,875 in 1940.

Shandaken population 2022, American Community Survey	
SEX AND AGE	
Total population	2925
Male	1720
Female	1205
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	142.7
Under 5 years	70
5 to 9 years	58
10 to 14 years	96
15 to 19 years	146
20 to 24 years	114
25 to 34 years	333
35 to 44 years	238
45 to 54 years	373
55 to 59 years	308
60 to 64 years	415
65 to 74 years	480
75 to 84 years	220
85 years and over	74
Median age (years)	55.8

Here are some other detailed social characteristics of the Shandaken population:

Housing

- Of the 2,658 housing units in Shandaken, 55.4 % (1472) of the homes are full time residents and 44.6% (1,145units) are owned by part-time residents.
- 89% of the 2,658 housing units in Shandaken are one-unit, detached structures (single-family). The next largest category 7% is multi-unit and 4% consists of mobile homes.
- Of the 1,473 households, 65% (957) are family households and 35% (516) are non-family households.
- Between the years 1998 and 2004, housing prices in Ulster County have nearly doubled. In the Town of Shandaken, the average home price is \$301,300 compared to \$285,400 in Ulster County.
- 53% of full-time residents in Shandaken moved into their current residence between 1990-2000.
- Vacancy rate for homeowners is 4.8% and the rental vacancy rate is 16.2%.
- Approximately 62% of housing structures are over 45 years old.
- 5.8% of the Shandaken homes were built since 1990.
- Over 91% of full-time residents have one or more vehicles.
- Homeownership rate increased from 70.4% to 72.1% (1990-2000), while the county rate dropped from 69.2% to 68.0%.
- 45.1% of the renters pay over 35% of their income for housing (36% and over is considered rent-burdened), as compared to 36.2% for the County.

Population & Education

- Population growth is stable at less than 1% per year since the 1990 Census.
- The median age in Shandaken is 55.8 years versus 44.2 years in Ulster County.
- The >65 population segment, which comprises 26.5% of the Shandaken population, up from 17.4 in 2000. The Ulster County rate is 20.5
- 93.9% of full-time residents have attained a high school degree or higher education. This is an increase from 84.2% in 2000.
- 48.3% of full-time residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, versus 26.6% in 1990.

Income & Employment

- Shandaken ranked 20 in Mean Income, and 24th in Median Income out of the 25 towns, city (Kingston) and villages in Ulster County in household and family median income in 1990 and 2000.

- However, Shandaken experienced the greatest median income increase (+15%) in the county.
- Average per capita income is \$44,338 – slightly higher than the Ulster County average of \$43,168.
- The median family income is \$55,139, versus \$40,297 in 2020.
- Family income over \$75,000 has increased to 28.3 %versus 20.8% in 2000.
- The largest industry is educational services, and health care and social assistance at 25.4%
- The largest industry in 2000 was (18%): arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food service. In 2020 it has decreased to 10.8%
- 18.7% are self-employed, versus 9.2% in Ulster County.

Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	19.2%
Retail trade	18.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10.4%
Public administration	6.6%
Construction	5.3%
Information	5.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.1%
Manufacturing	3.1%
Other services, except public administration	1.8%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	0.3%
Wholesale trade	0.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.0%

B. Land Use & Development Limitations

The present land use pattern has been influenced by the historic pattern of hamlet development, highway-oriented transportation, and state land ownership. The Town includes 12 hamlets (six delineated areas as per MOA), each with a distinct character. Roadside development often includes older dwellings and tourist-oriented businesses, such as motels and restaurants, interspersed with real estate offices and businesses/services that address the needs of residents. Small pockets of resource-related industries (sawmills and bluestone) still exist, but are not the economic factor that they were a century ago. The Forest Preserve lands stretch across the corridor in a patchwork pattern. Figure 1, Page 33, shows the current land use patterns. Figure 2, Page 34, shows the current Town Zoning. It should be noted that a concurrent effort is underway to update and amend the Zoning map and regulations; however, it is not complete at this time for incorporation into this plan

To provide opportunity for economic development, the Watershed Protection Plan allowed towns to delineate hamlet areas in which New York City cannot acquire additional land. Shandaken designated eligible hamlet areas - Mt. Tremper, Phoenicia, Shandaken/Allaben, Big Indian, Pine Hill and Chichester - and delineated a total additional area of almost 600 acres. This designation also serves the additional purpose of enabling a landowner within the designated area to be exempt from the regulatory prohibition on the creation of new impervious surfaces within 100 feet of a watercourse. Based on available information, some designated Hamlet areas, however, do not appear to correspond to what are generally

considered the Hamlet boundaries (Figures 3a-3g, Pages 35-41). This is discussed further in Section H. “Non-matching,” in Figures 3a-3g, indicates that the parcel numbers are not an exact match (they may have been subsequently subdivided), but are likely included. In addition, there are several parcel numbers which do not appear to exist, according to Town records. More recently, other factors, such as floodplains, environmental legislations, land acquisitions by the NYCDEP, etc., in addition to the scenic natural terrain characteristics that define the Town of Shandaken, have notably affected and limited development. A quick assessment of the current developable land (excluding state owned lands) would suggest that only approximately 4% (3,300 acres) of the available vacant or private open space could be developed, once adjustments for wetlands, water bodies, floodplain, and slopes of greater than 20% are accounted for. This could lead to an increased pressure to develop on the sides of the mountains, which leads to conflict with environmental goals and regulations.

Another development opportunity is the intensification of currently used land. For example, a 20-acre parcel could be subdivided according to zoning to produce a higher density development. Adjusting for wetlands, water bodies, floodplain, and steep slopes, an additional 1,460 acres (1.8%) could be available for development through subdivision.

In summary, approximately 6% of the Town of Shandaken (4,760 acres) has potential for future development, or put another way, 94% of the town is developed, has significant development limitations, or is highly regulated. The Town of Shandaken is comprised of approximately 79,200 acres. The following provides an approximate general breakdown of land use:

- 66% of this land is currently under public ownership and designated as public open space;
- 14% comprises of residential land uses;
- 9% of private open space;
- 7% vacant land;
- 4% miscellaneous

C. Economy & Tourism

Despite its natural amenities, the Town of Shandaken has faced a continuing struggle to provide a stable economy for its residents, as evident through the demographic trends discussed earlier in this plan. Historically, similar economic challenges have been faced by this community, as documented in previous economic strategy reports performed for the Route 28 corridor and through trends contained in the “West of Hudson Economic Development Study.”

Shandaken specifically is experiencing trends of an aging population, highly educated work force, rise in self-employed business owners, the lowest family and household average income in the county, with few amenities or opportunities to sustain or improve these trends.

The natural resources of the Catskill region and its proximity to 15 million people within a 150-mile radius, makes it a clear potential for importing and harnessing the tourism market. As a year-round destination within two hours driving time of 15 million people, the region’s potential to attract tourists is substantial. Shandaken was a major destination in its early history and has the makings of revitalization with the following tourist destinations: Belleayre Ski Center, Pine Hill Lake Day Use Area, the Catskill Park,

the Catskill Forest Preserve and State developed campsites in and near Shandaken, including Devil's Tombstone, Kenneth Wilson, and Woodland Valley, which contribute to the tourist economy. In addition, several other local (some private) attractions support and augment the state parks including a tourist railroad and the Empire State Railway Museum in Phoenicia. A myriad of available recreational activities includes hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, skiing, kayaking, tubing, and sightseeing. Privately owned camping facilities, hotels, bed and breakfast inns, restaurants, art galleries, antique shops and specialty shops compliment these amenities. Local businesses that serve residents, seasonal residents and visitors include, but are not limited to food markets, hardware stores, service stations, liquor stores, hair salons and eateries, such as delis and ice cream shops. Many artists and craftspeople live and work in the Town and sell their work locally and throughout the country.

D. Historic Resources

Shandaken has nine sites, which are listed on the

National Register of Historic places:

- Camp Wapanachki (currently Zen Mountain Monastery), Mt. Tremper
- Phoenicia Railroad Station, Phoenicia (Empire State Railway Museum)
- District Schoolhouse No. 14, Pine Hill
- Elm Street Stone Bridge, Pine Hill
- Mill Street Stone Bridge, Pine Hill
- Morton Memorial Library, Pine Hill
- Tremper Mountain Fire Tower, Mt. Tremper
- The Ulster Hotel (now The Wellington) Pine Hill
- Pine Hill Historic District.

Other properties in the Town may be eligible for listing on the National Register. There are properties of local significance that do not meet the National Register requirements. While these properties are not listed, they are acknowledged as important to the Shandaken community. The previous list is limited to only historical places outside of state property. There are other sites of historical significance to the community on state grounds, including:

- John Burroughs Memorial Forest is one of the noted historical resources in the area. This forest consists of White and Norway Spruce plantations established on an abandoned farm site in Rochester Hollow. A concrete marker dedicating the forest to Burroughs is located at the lower elevation near the hairpin turn on the Rochester Hollow access road.
- Shandaken Tunnel, partially built on the Shandaken Wild Forest, was constructed to allow the New York City Board of Water Supply to connect the Schoharie watershed to the Ashokan watershed. The tunnel excavation was completed February 13, 1923.
- Rochester Estate ruins, located in the Shandaken Wild Forest Preserve, was originally named after William Rochester, a retired Colonel who moved to the area and began to purchase small family farms to create a large estate. Stone pillars still exist at various locations along the road and are the remnants of the gated entrances to the Rochester Estate.

E. Infrastructure

1. Water & Sewer

Of the Town's larger hamlets, only Pine Hill and Chichester have municipal sewage systems, although a feasibility study is underway in Phoenicia. Sewage services are provided in Pine Hill through the NYC treatment plant in Big Indian (which also serves the Belleayre Ski Center) and a sewage treatment plant has been included in the next phase of the Watershed agreement for Phoenicia. Continued growth in the hamlets is inhibited by this deficiency and lack of developable land. Both Pine Hill and Phoenicia have central water supply systems. Most sewage disposal is through individual septic systems, the large majority of which are subject to regulation by the City of New York.

Most residents in the Town obtain their water from their own wells or streams. Water is provided by municipal water districts in Phoenicia and Pine Hill hamlets. Due to various physical, population density, fiscal and land limitations, water, and sewer services may not be feasible in other hamlets and villages.

2. Roads & Bridges

The Town has a network of roads and bridges, some of which are the responsibility of the State, some of the county and some of the Town. According to the New York State Department of Transportation, the Town of Shandaken has a total of 110.83 centerline highway miles. Of these, 64.06 centerline miles are under the Town jurisdiction; 21.11 centerline miles are under Ulster County jurisdiction; and 25.66 centerline miles are owned by the State. The State is responsible for the main highways crossing the Town (Routes 28, 42, 212 and 214). Route 28 is classified by the Department of Transportation as a "rural minor arterial," while the other state roads are considered "rural major collectors". The county is responsible for several main secondary roads, including Ulster County Routes 40, 47 and 49A. The town is responsible for the rest of the roads and streets. Figure 5 shows the existing roads in the Town, by jurisdiction. Figure 6 presents daily traffic volumes.

The State highways have a 55-mph speed limit throughout the town and there are no traffic lights or stop signs on Route 28. Most roads in the town have two travel lanes (one in each direction).

There are 59 bridges in the town. Bridges on Route 28, Route 42 and Route 214 are controlled and maintained by NYSDOT. None of these bridges are designed for pedestrian traffic. There are several bridges over the Esopus on county roads. There are numerous bridges on town roads in the various valleys.

A cursory visual inspection indicates that road conditions in the town vary greatly, from good to poor. There is evidence of pavement damage due to flooding and the annual freeze/thaw cycle, as well as poor conditions due to the age of the pavement. No state roads are currently rated "fair or poor" in the Town; however, two sections of CR 47 (by Big Indian and leading to the Denning town line) fall in this category. No condition rating information is available for Town roads.

5. Trails – Peds/Bikes

Sidewalks and crosswalks are limited primarily to the hamlet settings. A crosswalk has been designated on Route 28 in the area around Mt. Pleasant Road. There are no sidewalks along Route 28.

Considering the rural and natural park setting, there are numerous trails leading to and through the Catskill Park and other State lands.

6. Transit

The only municipal transportation services currently in the town consist of the Ulster County Rural Transportation, which provides twice-daily bus service between Highmount and Kingston. One private company is currently providing regularly scheduled bus service into and out of the town. In the summer season, Belleayre provides shuttle service between Belleayre Mountain and the Pine Hill Day Use Area.

7. Telecommunications Services

There are different aspects of telecommunications services: cell phones, where the signal comes from an antenna on a tower, high-speed Internet. Land-lines and public telephone services are becoming obsolete. Each has a unique dimension.

a. Cell Phone Facilities - The placement of transmission facilities is essential to the operation of wireless telephone services. At present, Shandaken lacks coordinated cell transmission facilities. There is an antenna on Highmount, and one at Glenbrook Park and as a result, a signal can be obtained only there or on limited mountain tops. Margaretville Telephone Company is installing Wi-Fi on Main St. Phoenicia and cell phone users will be able to obtain service there.

b. Internet Communication - There are essentially four methods of obtaining highspeed Internet connections: cable modem, satellite, digital subscriber lines (DSL) and wireless. Of these, satellite service and cable modem service are available in the Town. Since local cable systems for television were acquired by a private company, which upgraded its service by building in from its outermost reaches, Shandaken was among the first towns in the region to have highspeed Internet connections. There do not seem to be any plans to provide DSL service and the main telephone switch at Phoenicia is only a T-1 line, which is insufficient to carry high-speed internet service.

c. Emergency Communication – There are no payphones in Shandaken. Cell phone service is spotty, leaving gaps in ability for emergency calls to be made. This underscores the need for a plan for contiguous Wi-fi/broadband/Cell service throughout the town. This specific need is of critical importance to the emergency service providers, including the five fire houses/companies that serve the Town of Shandaken.

F. Power Supply

Electric power is distributed in the Town by New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG). All power lines are above ground.

G. Community Services & Facilities

There are several different community services as follows:

1. Public Libraries and Other Cultural Amenities

There are public libraries in both Pine Hill (the Morton Memorial Library) and Phoenicia. In addition, there is a Town Museum in Pine Hill and the Empire State Railway Museum in Phoenicia. The Shandaken Theater Society has a theater in Phoenicia. The Belleayre Conservatory hosts a weekly summer concert series.

2. Community Centers

The Pine Hill Community Center, located on Main St in Pine Hill, is open to all residents of the town. The center hosts many cultural and educational activities. The center is home to the Phoenicia Farmers Market in winter, monthly concerts, summer activities for children, a market for locally produced goods and more.

3. Public and Not-For-Profit Recreation Facilities

The town has public recreation facilities (either owned or leased) in Pine Hill, Big Indian, Glenbrook Park in Shandaken and Phoenicia. Town residents can use the following facilities:

- Belleayre Ski Center (including Pine Hill Lake)
- Gun club in Phoenicia
- Recreational facilities at the Phoenicia Elementary School, however now that the school is closed, use of this facility currently is not determined.
- State campground in Woodland Valley

4. Government Services

The town offices are in Allaben and Shandaken. The Supervisor, Town Board, planning and zoning, assessors and highway departments are in the municipal facilities in Allaben. The town police and emergency services are in offices in Shandaken next to Glenbrook Park.

5. Emergency Services

The Town provides emergency medical services through the Shandaken Ambulance. There are five volunteer fire companies and a town police force. These are generally considered adequate for the needs of the town at present. Belleayre Mountain is a FEMA facility and provides services in the event of a large emergency such as flooding.

6. Waste Collection and Recycling

Most residents have waste picked up by private companies serving the town. The town maintains a recycling center at the Town Hall. In January of 2024 the recycling center began taking food waste to be composted at a local farm.

7. Public Parking

Parking is a concern in the hamlets. In some of the main recreational and tourist attractions, ample parking is provided. Parking is limited in the villages and hamlets and part of hamlet revitalization has focused on providing more parking spaces to better accommodate the seasonal variations in town population. While the Town's zoning regulations make provisions for ensuring adequate parking for new construction, existing buildings in locations that were established before automobiles were common often cannot add parking. A reevaluation of the existing Zoning Code is warranted to possibly make requirements more lenient and provide adequate public parking to accommodate different needs. Public parking and rest areas are provided along Route 28.

H. Natural Features

The landforms that make up Shandaken include mountaintops, wooded and steep hillsides, mountain valleys, and significant natural communities of beech, maple, hemlock, ash, oak, other northern hardwoods, and conifer forests. Numerous streams feed the main watercourse - the Esopus Creek, and expanses of relatively flat land and open fields along the Esopus Valley (a.k.a. the Rte. 28 Corridor). Interspersed throughout the natural land features are the Town's hamlets, developed over the years where the terrain was accessible and conducive, mainly in the valleys and along major streams, such as the Esopus Creek, Woodland Valley, Birch Creek, and the Stony Clove.

Most of the mountains in Shandaken are protected under the NYS Constitution Forest Preserve, as shown previously, and are to be kept "Forever Wild." Within the Town of Shandaken, there are only a few mountaintops not under the Forest Preserve protection. One of them is Belleayre Ski Center that is owned by New York State. Belleayre Ski Center is the town's largest recreational tourist attraction and the only recreational parcel on a mountaintop. Other mountains under private ownership include Highmount, Balsam and Rose Mountain. Any development occurring on the privately owned mountains or sides must consider such items as visibility, erosion control, impacts on wildlife, significant ecological communities, scenic vistas, and other sensitive environmental features.

I. Other Significant Issues

Hamlet Designations

Over the years, twelve hamlets have formed in Shandaken, characterized by consolidated residential and commercial buildings (a hamlet is a settlement that is smaller than a typical village). Some are found in valleys - Woodland Valley, Oliverea, Chichester, Bushnellsville - others along the Esopus Creek / Route 28 Corridor - Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Tremper, Phoenicia, Shandaken, Allaben, Big Indian, Pine Hill and Highmount. When the Town worked with NYCDEP to develop a list of parcels that would be "designated hamlets", the intent was to protect all the lands that are currently thought of as the hamlets from acquisition by the NYCDEP. Outside of these designated Hamlets, the Town was also able to reserve 50 acres of land that is unattainable. NYCDEP has the authority to acquire parcels not part of the designated hamlets or these 50 acres, in accordance with the terms of the MOA. However, each parcel must be at least 10 acres in size and cannot have a habitable dwelling on it, in addition to other criteria. If the parcel is in a floodway, they may be able to acquire parcels less than 10 acres, but in all cases, they cannot acquire any land unless the seller is willing to sell it.

A Town Resolution, dated April 29, 1997, listed parcels identified by the Town as "designated hamlets." These parcels are mapped on Figures 3a-3g, pages 35-41. Assuming that there is no missing information, the "designated hamlets" boundaries do not correspond to the generally accepted boundaries of these hamlets. However, because of the restrictions on parcels that the NYCDEP can acquire, it appears that all the lands within the generally accepted hamlets are protected from acquisition.

Flooding and Other Potential Disasters

Most of the Town's development is in the valleys of Esopus Creek and its tributaries. As such, there is a high potential for significant flood impacts. This has been clear during several significant flood events over the in recent decades. Residents were displaced, businesses were shut down, roads and creek banks were severely damaged and emergency services were cut off. There is the potential for similar impacts during snowstorms, ice storms or other major weather events. needs to be updated with Safari info

Environmental Protection vs. Economic Development

Perhaps the most significant issue facing the Town is the growing conflict between three key issues described earlier in this section of the plan:

- The desire to preserve the environment, particularly scenic views, and the visibility of the night sky;
- The Watershed Protection Plan, which seeks to acquire as much land as possible to preserve the New York City water supply, including some of the already small number of developable parcels in the Town; and
- Local residents who need additional economic opportunities to sustain their quality of life and the Town, which needs the income to prosper and provide the services that the residents need.

It is important to note that these issues do not necessarily have to be in conflict and are not unique to the Town of Shandaken – they are much more regional in nature. County, State and Federal agencies, NYCDEP, environmental and economic development agencies are all keenly aware of the conflicting issues in the Catskill region. As such, solutions may also need to be developed on a regional level.

III. SHANDAKEN TOMORROW

A. Future Needs

This section reviews the inherent needs based on current conditions and deficiencies.

1. Population and Housing

According to the Bureau of the Census-Building Permits Annual Summary report, the total number of residential building permits from 1990-1999 totaled 59 units – an average of 6 permits per year. In the previous decade, the number of building permits averaged 19 per year. Building permits are anticipated to be minimal and at a flat rate. The number of houses in Shandaken is anticipated to increase at a steady rate per historical trends. Most existing residential parcels are already built, especially within the hamlet and village areas. However, intensification of existing residential parcels is possible. The cost of housing will continue to be a significant issue, as a lower percentage of housing that is considered “affordable” will exist.

According to the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council - Population Forecasts for Ulster County and the surrounding five counties within the NYC metropolitan statistical area, Ulster County is anticipated to experience a flat growth rate of less than 1%/year until the year 2020. The County total

population is projected to increase to 190,389 by 2010 and 203,871 by 2020. The Town of Shandaken population is estimated to increase at a rate of approximately 0.62%/year and reach 3,635 by the year 2020. The proportion of senior citizens to the total population has been steady, but the increase in longevity, plus the likely conversion of part-time residents to full-time retirees, will lead to an eventual increase in that segment of the population. Most will continue to live in their own residences.

2. Land Use and Development

Due to the significant amount of land under the State or NYC ownership as part of the Catskill Park or Forest Preserve, limited opportunity exists for future development to occur in the community. Combining these State or NYC lands with the built hamlet and village environments, approximately 84% of the Town of Shandaken is “built out”. The remaining land that is either vacant, under private ownership, or can be further intensified is estimated at approximately 4,760 acres or 16% of the Town. Most of this potential development is scattered throughout the town and primarily located along the valleys and the Route 28 corridor. According to preliminary calculations, approximately 1,460 acres could see increased development intensities according to existing zoning. In addition, there are private and vacant lands throughout the town that could provide an additional 3,300 acres of development. **Full build out of this land is not anticipated within the time frame of this plan.** These approximate projections on the remaining land that may be developed in the future do not take into consideration the potential changes in the floodway and floodplain that may result from FEMA’s update of flood zone maps.

Another consideration is the type of development the community wishes to encourage. While property owners do have the right to develop their properties, communities can consider development regulations related to type, density, building materials used and styles that are consistent with the vision of the community and compatible with the surrounding environment. Such development regulations are a way to balance the rights of the property owners and fulfill community needs.

3. Infrastructure

Water & Sewer – Pine Hill and part of Chichester have sewer systems. Phoenicia’s system is in the planning stages. Pine Hill, Phoenicia, and parts of Chichester have water service. Continued growth in the hamlets is inhibited by this deficiency and alternative and creative opportunities to serve the entire community should be considered.

Cell Phone Service - The placement of signal transmission equipment is essential to the operation of wireless telephone services for the residents, visitors, and emergency service providers. At present, Shandaken lacks needed transmission equipment, except for a cell tower on Highmount and one at Glenbrook Park in Shandaken. Every opportunity should be examined to identify additional locations for signal transmission equipment placement (utility rights of way, trails, public and private mountain ranges). There are several types of equipment available today – large, intrusive cell towers are no longer the only option. New and innovative technology related to the aesthetic characteristics of signal transmission equipment can allow them to blend into any environment. They can be disguised as trees, church steeples, building peaks and flag poles to minimize the impacts on the surrounding environment, while providing a critical service to the success of the community

Internet Communication - Additional methods of obtaining high-speed Internet connections (cable modem, satellite, digital subscriber lines) and wireless should be considered.

Pedestrians/Trails – Pedestrian amenities should be maintained and enhanced at each of the major hamlets to encourage community cohesion and vitality. Sidewalk and/or trail systems connecting the commercial main streets of each hamlet and village to the core residential areas should be considered. The Phoenicia Riverwalk should be constructed. The trails currently available should be continued and expanded upon. These trail systems should connect and link each of the hamlets and villages or multi-modal transportation stations. A community-wide greenway, trail and multi-modal plan should be considered. Public/private partnerships will likely be necessary to successfully implement this plan.

Transportation System – Land use and transportation needs should be balanced to meet the communities economic and development needs, while reducing traffic congestion, improving safety, and incorporating multi model transportation options. Route 28 is currently operating well below capacity and is capable of handling notable increases in traffic volumes (seasonal or permanent), without the need for additional through travel lanes. The Ulster County Transportation Plan forecasts the Route 28 segment from Phoenicia east to the town line as experiencing an increase in traffic volumes from the latest 5,100 AADT to 6,100 ADT, or a 20% change by the year 2020. While this volume is the highest served in the Town of Shandaken, is considered a low-volume road segment. The volume to capacity ratio for this same section of Route 28 is anticipated to increase from 0.20 to 0.23. This means that this segment will still only carry less than a quarter of its capacity. The remaining road segments are anticipated to see similar growth rates of approximately 1%/year and will continue to operate well below capacity. These projections, documented in the “Ulster County Transportation Plan,” include regional growth patterns, and locations of anticipated growth based on the projected housing, population, and employment bases.

These projections are purely based on past and projected regional trends outlined by the county. Specific development opportunities may arise that could alter these projected patterns. Any major development within any community is normally required to identify and mitigate their direct impact on the highway system, environment, and town services, through state, county and town highway access permitting laws and environmental procedures.

The Town of Shandaken experiences seasonal fluctuations in traffic volumes during various times of the year. During high peak seasons, traffic volumes may increase sharply and place additional demand on the transportation system. Continuous monitoring should be performed at the major intersections along the Route 28 corridor, including the entrances to the various hamlets: State Routes 42, 214, and 212 and County Routes 47 and 49A intersections. Evaluation of the need for left turn lanes at these primary intersections should be considered with any major development that may occur. In addition, traffic control devices and street lighting for added safety, should be considered at these locations.

Flood Protection – Development in the valleys must consider the serious problem of flooding and what mechanisms or programs are available to limit damage to existing structures or new development in the floodplains. Given the narrow topography of valleys and the fact that most private land is found here, future impacts to residents and businesses from flooding must be considered and addressed. The impacts on the Town’s infrastructure (buildings, roads, utilities) and emergency services could also be significant. Ways to both minimize flood damages and to handle flood emergencies should be explored.

4. Community Services

Emergency Communication – Contiguous Wi-Fi/Broadband/Cell service is vital to public safety in the town and should be pursued.

Public Parking - Parking is limited in the village hamlets and part of hamlet revitalization has focused on providing more parking spaces to better accommodate the seasonal population variations. The Town's zoning regulations make provisions for ensuring adequate parking for new construction, however existing structures, mostly in hamlets, are at a disadvantage as our towns were developed before automobile transportation was the norm. The property surrounding these structures seldom lends room for adequate parking. The Zoning code should be revised to address this.

Public Facilities – The Town currently does not have an evacuation center of sufficient size to handle a significant amount of the population, in case of a flood or other disaster, however Belleayre Mountain is a FEMA facility. The Town does not have modern, centralized facilities for communication, emergency services and public services. Public restrooms throughout the town are desired.

B. Vision & Goals

The future of the Town of Shandaken must rest on a commonly shared vision of progress. The past, present and future of Shandaken is tied to its unique natural resources – the mountain ranges, the streams, and the valleys. These resources -magnificent mountains, clear streams, diverse wildlife, spectacular views -- provide the raw material for a healthy, peaceful lifestyle for the Town's residents, balanced with a successful economy based on environmentally sensitive development to sustain them. Based on the history, natural resources and the needs of the community, the Town of Shandaken is a natural peaceful haven that has a significant potential to draw upon the tourism market. With the tourist-based businesses that exist today, plus continued coordinated efforts to enhance these natural resources, Shandaken has a bright future.

To achieve this vision, the comprehensive plan establishes the following goals and objectives (goals are in bold-face type):

A. Protect and preserve the environmental, historical, and cultural features and resources within the Town of Shandaken from harm, physical degradation, and visual impacts.

- Minimize, through land use planning, zoning and/or development regulations impacts to existing air quality, water quality, wetlands, streams, fauna, flora, visibility, steep slopes, and scenic vistas.
- Determine and incorporate needed erosion and sedimentation control, plus storm water management requirements into site plan regulations to maintain regional water quality.
- Identify the most valuable manmade resources, which are of historic, archaeological, or cultural significance, and implement all practicable means to protect and restore these resources. Promote these features in tourism materials.
- The long tradition of arts, crafts and cultural expression in the Central Catskills should be strongly supported and encouraged as a link to the Town's past and an integral part of the future.

B. Promote the economic development of the Town of Shandaken to ensure an acceptable standard of living for its residents.

- Economic development decisions will be guided by the desire to achieve a balance between environmental protection, quality of life and employment opportunities for community residents.

- Recognize the link between economic development and available income-appropriate housing and establish proactive means to ensure that each is in balance with the other.
- Promote and develop four-season tourism based on the Town's extensive natural, historic, and cultural resources.
- Promote business activities, which do not negatively impact natural resources or the environment.
- Encourage cottage industries, arts, crafts, theatre, music, and home-based businesses as economic development means.
- Assist local businesses in obtaining financing by establishing links with appropriate agencies and financial institutions.

C. Provide programs and laws to guide future development towards desired patterns within the Town of Shandaken.

- Establish a development pattern utilizing land use regulations, public investment strategies and other means that are consistent with environmental constraints and opportunities, balance the socio-economic needs of the community and respectful of existing or historical land use patterns.
- Employ the Town's Land Use Plan, Zoning Law, and Subdivision Regulations to reflect desired traditional development locations, quality and patterns of concentrated hamlets separated by low-density open areas. Existing hamlets should be revitalized and the distinct character of each identified and promoted.
- Development regulations should be flexible enough to accommodate specific development circumstances, without jeopardizing the development patterns outlines in this Plan. Incentives could be provided to developers who contribute desired types and sizes of development, protect important natural or man-made features.
- Develop a means to support tourism in the area that includes encouraging government and non-profits, businesses, and the facilities themselves to better plan, coordinate and expand tourism-related activities.
- Use expanded infrastructure to promote growth in desired areas.
- Certain uses, especially adult businesses, and casino gambling, are incompatible with the rural character of the Town and should be limited and restricted to the extent allowed by law.
- Housing opportunities for the full economic range of the Town's population should be encouraged in a form that is compatible with the scale and pattern of increased needs.
- Hamlet Zoning, as well as all zoning districts, should be reviewed to define the limits within which economic development efforts should be focused.

D. Provide the infrastructure necessary to meet the other Comprehensive Plan goals and to meet the health, safety and quality of life needs of the residents of Shandaken.

- Necessary infrastructure (sewage disposal, storm water and water supply) and public parking must be provided to allow further development in the hamlets.

- State of the art communications services must be provided to facilitate economic growth, particularly in sectors that are dependent on high-speed access to outside markets, and to enhance emergency service response.
- A safe and efficient transportation system should be maintained to meet the needs of the community, particularly the youth and senior citizens.
- Multi-modal transportation (rail, trails, sidewalk) systems should be expanded and linked to the major hamlets and villages.
- Enhanced, affordable public service should be provided to support the quality of life of residents and the experience of tourists.
- Community/cultural centers that bind the history and the future of Shandaken should be encouraged consistent with economic and tourism goals.
- Facilities that meet the day-to-day needs of the town should be considered.
- A flood avoidance, mitigation and protection plan should be developed and implemented to minimize flood damage.

E. Be proactive in establishing regional partnerships to address issues that transcend the Town boundaries

- Develop working relationships and a spirit of cooperation with involved state and federal agencies, and private organizations, to work towards common goals. Facilitate cooperative relationships with involved local, state, and federal agencies, NYCDEP, and private organizations, to work together to address the often conflicting environmental and economic issues that face the Catskill region.
- Work with area Chambers of Commerce or other economic development agencies/groups to develop regional economic incentive programs.
- Work with NYSDOT, Ulster County, NYSDEC, NYCDEP and other agencies/groups to develop solutions to regional transportation, flooding, water supply and other infrastructure issues.

F. Develop community education and outreach programs to foster an understanding of key issues facing the Town and encourage public participation in developing effective solutions

- Develop a public education program to make people aware of key environmental, development, economic, housing, infrastructure, and other issues in the Town.
- Using social media and the towns website, develop effective means to communicate information and obtain input from the community. A Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) page could be added as well as other resources to increase and update the towns digital footprint, online presence and website.
- Continue to provide ample opportunity for public involvement in all Town processes.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A. Natural, Historic & Cultural Features and Resources

1) Land Use Plan, Zoning Law, Development/Site Plan Regulation Changes

- a. The Town of Shandaken Land Use Plan, Zoning Law and Development/ Site Plan Regulations should be updated to ensure that natural, historic, and cultural features that are important to the Town are protected. A Zoning Revision Committee shall be established to address all zoning issues. This committee should represent all residents in the town. **Priority: Immediate**
- b. Critical environmental areas should be identified and designated. Development plans in sensitive areas must include erosion protection plans. The Town of Shandaken has appointed a Conservation Advisory Council that will be conducting a Natural Resources Inventory. **Priority: Short-Term**
- c. Specific design standards and review procedures should be established for structures that may detract from the character of the hamlets, villages, or overall community. Site and development guidelines should be developed by the Zoning Revision Committee and used to ensure preservation of important scenic resources **Priority: Short-Term**
- d. Zoning requirements and site plan review should be used to minimize the adverse effects of development on designated and other freshwater wetlands and their associated drainage basins. Adverse effects include erosion, sedimentation, pollution, and damage to wildlife habitats. **Priority: Immediate**
- e. Along with the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR), Zoning requirements and site plan review should be used to minimize the adverse effects of development on designated and other freshwater wetlands and their associated drainage basins. Adverse effects include erosion, sedimentation, pollution, and damage to wildlife habitats. **Priority: Immediate**
- g. Lighting regulations should be reviewed to make sure that they minimize light spillage, meet minimum safety requirements, and yet preserve the rural nature of the Catskill Park setting and the visibility of the night sky. Standards such as Dark Sky Compliance for lighting fixtures should be adopted. **Priority: Short-Term**
- h. Any future development should be planned based on a sufficient water supply. Investigate funding sources for a town-wide hydrogeologic study to identify water resources. Any future development should be planned based on a sufficient water supply. **Priority: Immediate**
- i. Continue the development of the GIS database, particularly with respect to environmental and land uses, for use in making future land use and planning decisions. AWSMP and SAFARI studies already completed and planned should be incorporated into the plan. **Priority: Immediate**
- j. Continue the development of the GIS database, particularly with respect to environmental and land uses, for use in making future land use and planning decisions. This information should be available digitally and available to all boards, committees, and the public. **Priority: Immediate**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board
Ulster County Planning Department

2) Regional Natural Features/Resource Protection

a. Coordinate with jurisdictional agencies to monitor and stabilize the banks of existing streams to prevent further erosion, where required, and repair eroded banks using techniques that minimize damage to the natural environment. Coordinate with jurisdictional agencies to pursue funding for stream bank stabilization. The AWSMP is an excellent resource on what has been done and what needs to be done.

Priority: *Immediate*

b. Recreational uses of fish and wildlife resources must ensure the protection of fish and wildlife resources and take into consideration other activities dependent on these resources and protection of water quality. **Priority:** *Immediate*

c. The Catskill Mountain Scenic Byway was designated in 2015. The Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway follows RTE 28 from the town of Olive in Ulster County to Andes in Delaware County. The drive takes motorists through the towns of Olive, Shandaken, the villages of Fleischmanns and Margaretville, Middletown, and Andes all within Ulster and Delaware Counties. This important resource should be supported and maintained for regional and local benefit. **Priority:** *Immediate*

3) Man-Made Resource Preservation/Restoration

a. Proposed actions to historic, architectural, cultural, or archaeological resources, that would be incompatible with the objective of preserving the quality and integrity of the resources and their surroundings, should be carefully considered. Compatibility between the proposed action and the resource means that the general appearance of the resource should be reflected in the architectural style, design material, scale, proportion, composition, mass, line, color, texture, detail, setback, landscaping, and related items of the proposed action to the maximum extent possible. Design standards should be developed so development does not deviate from these goals. **Priority:** *Immediate*

b. Alteration of or addition to one or more of the architectural, structural, ornamental, or functional features of a building, structure, or site that is a recognized historic, cultural, or archaeological resource, should be minimized, if practicable. Demolition or removal in full or part of a building, structure, or earthworks that is a recognized historic, cultural, or archaeological resource should be prevented. Buildings and signs should be consistent with the architecture and rural character of the area in terms of design and materials. **Priority:** *Immediate*

c. Identify additional structures and resources in the Town that are eligible for listing on the National Register. Grants and/or loans for restoration of historic structures could be sought, particularly for structures in the hamlets that can contribute to overall hamlet revitalization. These resources should be promoted by the town and through social media. **Priority:** *Short-Term*

Responsible Parties: *Town Board*
 Planning Board

B. Economic Development

1) Commerce and Business

a. Continue to work closely with local business associations. Local groups include the Phoenicia Business Association (open to all Shandaken), Phoenicia Rotary, PH2, Central Catskill Chamber of Commerce, and Ulster County Chamber of Commerce. These organizations implement educational programs, help attract new desired forms of development, encourage development that is consistent with the goals of this Plan, facilitate cooperation with neighboring towns to develop regional economic programs, assist with new business and home business start-ups, and provide information and access to programs and financial assistance sources to assist economic development efforts. **Priority: Short-Term**

b. The professional brochure, promoting the Town to tourists and businesses, should be regularly updated. Promotion of the Town via its website should be kept current and used to its full potential. In today's increasing technological society, the website can be an important marketing and communication point for the Town to provide business, regulation and tourist information, and business incentives. Grant funding for website enhancement can be obtained from a variety of sources. **Priority: Immediate**

c. The Ulster and Delaware right-of-way is owned by Ulster County. The rail tracks are currently leased by the county to Rail Explorers for use as a ride on the track between Phoenicia and Boiceville. This right-of-way is a unique and invaluable resource. Currently it is being studied by Ulster County to determine its potential for a Rail Trail, with plans to begin construction from Highmount down to Pine Hill Lake/Belleayre Beach Day Use Area in 2025. The location along the Esopus Creek and Route 28 not only makes for unparalleled scenic views and access, but also provides the link by which the many activity centers along the corridor can be economically and visually connected. Hiking, biking, scenic river walks and trails should be developed to link hamlets together. **Priority: Long-Term**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
 Planning Board

2) Incentive Programs

The Town should work with community-based business organizations, local advocacy groups and the Ulster County Industrial Development Agency (UCIDA) to develop incentive programs to attract desired types of businesses, particularly home-based businesses and small industries that can establish without a need for a significant amount of infrastructure. Incentives could include things like start-up assistance, tax abatement and marketing assistance. Home-based businesses can be encouraged by not imposing strict location and process regulations. **Priority: Short-Term**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
 Planning Board
 Ulster County IDA
 Ulster County Development Corp.
 Ulster County Planning Department

3) Funding Identification/Assistance

The Town should act as a sponsor for economic development grants and develop partnerships with financial organizations and institutions. Community Development Block Grant funding can be obtained to assist with things like sidewalk construction and building rehabilitation. This can be important to make the Hamlets more attractive. **Priority: Immediate**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board

4) Fair and Consistent Application of Laws and Regulations

Zoning and land use regulations should be strictly enforced in a fair and uniform manner to help foster an atmosphere of good business climate and living environment. **Priority: Immediate**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board

C. Development Patterns

1) Establish Desired Land Use Types, Characteristics and Locations

a. Determine and map desired growth areas. Identify specific potential development parcels and provide incentives for the desired types of development. Develop and implement an infrastructure improvement plan for these desired growth areas. Focus on hamlet revitalization programs. Working with or through a Zoning Revision Committee ensure that parcels are zoned to maximize their potential to fit in with the vision of this plan. **Priority: Short-Term**

The following presents the land use and development recommendations:

Hamlets

- Hamlet revitalization should be promoted and coordinated through use of available loan and grant programs to encourage appropriate business development and building renovation.
- Events such as historic tours, music and arts festivals, crafts fairs, farmers markets etc. should be organized in the hamlets at frequent intervals and coordinated between the hamlets.
- New development within the hamlet areas should be compatible with the existing hamlet development, as appropriate to the capacity of sewer and water systems.
- Mixed uses combining residential and commercial development are attractive, as they tend to reduce traffic and help concentrate activity within the hamlets.
- Where possible, hamlet street beautification should be encouraged to integrate diverse building forms

Route 28 Corridor

- In 2015 Rte. 28 became a Scenic Byway. This 52-mile designation runs from the town of Olive in Ulster County to the Town of Andes in Delaware County
- Between the hamlets, Route 28 is the image of the Central Catskills - long views of mountains, glimpses of mountain streams, open fields and wooded hillsides and a varied array of small, diverse structures and uses glimpsed at 55 mile per hour. In general, development along this corridor should not be extensively promoted and should be limited to small, cottage-type businesses. The design principle for Route 28 should be to blend manmade development into the natural landscape to the maximum extent possible and to prevent an increase in development intensity in terms of physical and visual impact.
- Existing vegetation or new landscaping should be maintained between buildings and parking lots and the roadway. Residences should be set back as far as possible and screened by natural growth, stone walls or fences. Incentives to encourage beautification of existing parcel frontages should be considered.
- New building placements should be sensitive to protecting the rural character portrayed along the corridor.
- Buildings and signs should be consistent with the architecture and rural character of the area in terms of design and materials.
- Unless the nature of the specific use requires a site with unique features, tourist destination uses should be in or adjacent to the hamlets.
- Cottage industries and tourist-related businesses should be encouraged.

Mountain Valleys: Rtes. 42, 212, 214, Woodland Valley, and Hollows

- Most development along these roads is residential or community service in nature.
- These roads often provide access to tourist recreational destinations, such as campgrounds and creek access.
- There is very limited land available for development along most of these corridors. The corridors are mostly very narrow, due to floodplain issues.
- Development should be limited to residential, home businesses, and small businesses related to tourism. Overnight accommodations could also be encouraged, if they are compatible with the surrounding land uses.
- Buildings should be consistent with the natural character of the area in terms of design and materials.
- Development intensity should be low.

Mountainsides, Ridgelines and Mountaintops

- Regulations by other authorities, as well as Town of Shandaken Zoning Laws, limits development on most mountainsides, ridgelines, and mountaintops within the Town of Shandaken.
- Development in these areas should not be encouraged.

- Any development or utilities should be responsible to the environment and appropriately regulated. They should be closely examined for the dynamics between the need for economic development and protection of scenic vistas and the environment. In all cases, rigorous standards and guidelines should be established to mitigate all impacts, particularly impacts to the Route 28 and hamlet viewsheds.

- Any development in these areas should be sensitive to the Route 28 and hamlet viewsheds.

b. Rehabilitation of the towns' existing housing stock is the most effective means to provide housing opportunities that are compatible with existing development patterns and to foster hamlet revitalization. **Alternative housing needs to meet the needs of seasonal and visitors to the area should be considered.**

Priority: *Short-Term*

c. Pursue the goal of prohibiting casino gambling within the Catskill Park Blue Line Designation.

Priority: *Short-Term*

d. Encourage continued development of the Belleayre Ski Center as a four-season facility consistent with the carrying capacity of the area's sewer, water, and transportation system. **Priority:** *Short-Term*

e. Access to and use of the vast New York State lands must be planned in a way that benefits both users and the tourist economy. Coordinate and cooperate with State led efforts to provide this needed access. **Priority:** *Short-Term*

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board
Chambers of Commerce

2) Modifications to Development/Site Plan Regulations, Land Use Plan and Zoning Laws

Existing zoning and land use regulations should be modified to reflect the recommended actions in the Comprehensive Plan and to encourage the desired development types, locations, and characteristics. It is not the intent to increase zoning densities currently. **Priority:** *Short-Term*

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board

3) Review Hamlet Boundaries

Hamlet boundaries should be reviewed to make sure that they reflect existing land use patterns, current investment in public infrastructure and desired future growth areas. Many economic development recommendations in this plan focus on the Hamlets. Having defined Hamlet boundaries will help to focus the development efforts on the desired locations and would help when pursuing grants and other funding for Hamlet revitalization projects. **Priority:** *Short-Term*

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board

4) Provide Incentives to Build Desired Developments

Encourage development and use of loan and grant programs for rehabilitation of existing housing stock. Encourage development of new housing for senior citizens and long-term renters. Grants, financing assistance and tax abatement can be used to promote desired development. **Priority: Long-Term**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board

5) Provide Full Range of Housing Opportunities

A healthy housing mix is essential to the overall economic health of the community including; aiding local businesses in labor force attraction and retention as well as provide for additional revenues for businesses, providing construction jobs and associated material purchases, some of which occur locally, and generation of critical mass that allows for creation of service-oriented businesses within the community that revitalizes the hamlets and reduces needed travel. Available long term affordable rental housing is at a critical low nationwide.

a) Encourage development and use of loan and grant programs for rehabilitation of existing housing stock. Grants, financing assistance and tax abatement can be used to promote desired development.

Priority: Short-Term

c) Support Shandaken's Housing Smart Task Force to develop a definition of housing needs to ensure that the community recognizes regional housing needs and assumes responsibility for creating and upholding the needs specific to Shandaken. Hud provides definitions and guidance to assist in this.

Priority: Immediate

d) Establish a zoning revision committee to update and modernize town code to promote smart growth development, green building solutions, appropriate density, and diverse housing options for a variety of incomes. Establish flexibility in design, density, and unit type to provide a healthy housing mix.

Priority: Short-Term

e) Rehabilitation of the town's existing housing stock is the most effective means to provide housing opportunities that are compatible with existing development patterns and to foster hamlet revitalization. Review existing housing stock, looking at the conditions of existing homes that could provide housing opportunities that are compatible with existing development patterns **Priority: Short-Term**

f) Diverse housing opportunities to meet the needs of seasonal to the area should be prioritized.

Priority: Short-Term

g) Work with housing experts and consultants to identify resources for the Town to explore regarding tax incentives, zoning policies, modern technology, and web-based solutions. Build the capacity for town employees to implement and manage such systems through training programs and continuing education. **Priority: Short-Term**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board
Housing Smart Task Force

D. Infrastructure

1) Utility Plan and Expansion

a. Work with the respective utility companies to develop a long-range, comprehensive utility plan, which, when feasible, will place all overhead utilities underground or will use other unobtrusive methods.

Priority: Long-Term

b. When feasible, repair or construction of underground utilities (electric, phone and cable) in the hamlets should be coordinated with sidewalk repair and replacement, development of off-street parking areas and underground relocation of overhead lines. **Priority:** Immediate

c. Plans for new or expanded sewage and wastewater treatment facilities and storm water systems should involve close coordination with appropriate regulatory agencies. **Priority:** Short-Term

d. Research capacity and ways to expand water distribution in both the Pine Hill and Phoenicia Water District facilities. Provide for storm water handling in the hamlets in accordance with DEP regulations.

Priority: Short-Term

e. Shandaken Residents have use of the Saugerties Transfer Station and/or use a private carting company for trash removal. Means to improve trash removal, and a convenient, more local location for a transfer station should be explored. **Priority:** Long-Term

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board
Utility Companies

2) Communication Infrastructure Plan and Upgrades

a. The Town should work with various telecommunications companies to develop a communications infrastructure plan. This plan would provide for emergency communication, high-speed internet access and cellular phone service, while minimizing impacts on the environment. **Priority:** Immediate

b. New communication and transportation infrastructure should be consistent with the environmental goals of this plan. Specifically, controls on lighting, use of computer visualization to see how equipment will look in the natural setting, camouflaging and permissible locations and heights. Location of equipment along ridgelines should be discouraged, except if effectively camouflaged, as it would seriously detract from the scenic vistas of the Town. **Priority:** Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board
Telecommunication Service Providers

3) Transportation and Parking Program

a. To enhance the town's ability to achieve safety goals, the Town should coordinate with Ulster County and NYSDOT to identify road improvements, which would fix current deficiencies and could enhance the Town's ability to achieve its goals. Specifically, the fixing of the State roads within the Town should be given top priority. **Priority:** Immediate

b. Develop and implement a Highway Management Plan, in conjunction with the County and NYSDOT. The Plan could include a database inventory of roadway facilities and conditions, plus prioritization and capital budgeting for road maintenance and upgrades. The plan should explore ways to make better use of highway funding, focusing on safety improvements and reducing long-term maintenance costs. **Priority: Short-Term**

c. Bike lanes should be incorporated into highway and bridge designs, where feasible. **Priority: Immediate**

d. Locations for off-street parking facilities in Pine Hill, Phoenicia and the other Hamlets should be identified and evaluated. **Priority: Immediate**

e. The Town should work with UCAT to achieve reliable route schedules. Transit alternatives to meet specialized transportation needs should be considered. Specific transportation needs of the youth, senior citizens and disabled should be considered. **Priority: Long-Term**

f. New road, driveway, parking lot and sidewalk construction should take into consideration snow removal in their design. **Priority: Immediate**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Town Highway Superintendent

4) Transportation Safety Concern Areas

High accident areas should be identified, documented, and submitted to NYSDOT and Ulster County for potential improvement projects. **Priority: Immediate**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Town Highway Superintendent

5) Trails and Recreation Development

a. Grants should be sought to expand the area trail network. Further investigate trail projects, such as the Phoenicia River Walk and Tanbark Trail. Cooperation with adjacent towns should be encouraged to further develop a regional scenic rail corridor and further develop the regional trail network. **Priority: Short-Term**

b. Opportunities for “turnouts”, where people can enjoy scenic vistas or read interpretive signs regarding the area’s history, should be investigated. The vistas and signs should also be provided along the trail system. **Priority: Short-Term**

c. Tourist information services, visitor centers, lodging referral networks, and similar services should be coordinated with all involved public, non-profit and business agencies to provide ‘one-stop shopping’. Provide restrooms at rest areas where possible. **Priority: Short-Term**

d. A Catskill Interpretive Center has been built in Mt. Tremper to welcome visitors and educate them regarding the history and natural resources of the area. The location is attractive and approximately halfway between the Thruway and Belleayre at a point where the visitor has left behind much of the commercial/suburban development and is beginning to sense arrival at a special place. The immediate environs of the site relate closely to the mountains and the Esopus Creek, which convey the essence of

the Central Catskills. It is an ideal opportunity to provide information and services at the entrance to the Central Catskills. The town should continue to work with the Center going forward to promote the Catskills and the TOS. **Priority: Short-Term**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board

6) Public Facilities

Explore the need for a community facility that is not in a floodway. Any community facility should be developed with extensive input from the public, particularly the potential users to ensure that it would meet their needs. Determine sources of funds. Identify and evaluate potential sites and if residents desire the facility, ensure that it is preserved for this specific use. **Priority: Long-Term**

This facility could house or serve as any or all the following:

- Town Hall
- Highway Department Facility
- Library
- Senior Citizens Center
- Meeting Hall
- Evacuation Center
- Emergency Services
- Recreation Center/Pool
- Skate Park

Responsible Parties: Town Board

7) Flood Prevention and Mitigation

Locations that are most prone to flood damage should be identified. Effective methods to avoid and minimize flooding should be researched. Work with FEMA and other agencies to identify means to help avoid floods and minimize damage. Specific locations, methods and funding sources should be determined. **Priority: Immediate**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
FEMA
Army Corps of Engineers

E. Regionalism and Partnerships

1) The Town should consider taking the lead in developing regional solutions for environmental and development goals. Develop a regional roundtable to work on the critical environment vs. development issues. **Priority: Long-Term**

2) Promote cooperation and coordination efforts between involved and overlapping agencies. To take advantage of the significant resources available to the community, develop partnerships of understanding and assistance, not only in decision-making but also in implementation of local projects, to

protect or enhance the environment. Use the partnerships to assist in meeting community goals in an environmentally responsive way. **Priority: Short-Term**

3) Encourage cooperation with governmental and nongovernmental organizations to promote economic revival and to develop regional incentive programs to attract desired types of businesses.

Priority: Short-Term

4) Work with Ulster County, NYSDOT and other agencies/groups to identify regional multi-modal transportation solutions, including, but not limited to, trail network expansion, and transit. **Priority: Long-Term**

5) Work with FEMA, other agencies, and other Towns in the Catskill region to identify regional solutions to flooding issues. **Priority: Immediate**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board
AWSMP
Various Regional Orgs. /Agencies

F. Public Education and Outreach

1) Continue to develop and implement a Public Education and Outreach plan. Define the methods, target audience and types of information to be transmitted. Ensure that sufficient means exist for all segments of the population to receive necessary information and provide input. **Priority: Immediate**

2) Continue to maintain and develop the Town website and encourage the use of social media platforms' as effective tools for public education and outreach. Streamline the Town's regulatory, application and public input processes to make them web-based, as well as in written form. Provide statistical and GIS-based graphical information about the town, its characteristics, its laws and regulations, and proposed plans and projects. **Priority: Immediate**

3) Use the planned Catskill Interpretive Center as a public education center. Consider web access points and streaming video to transmit critical information. Consider education programs in the schools to make students aware of critical issues and involving them in solving various problems in the Town. **Priority: Short-Term**

4) Work with the Housing Smart Committee for education and outreach, as they provide a forum to discuss the need for a healthy housing mix. **Priority: Short-Term**

Responsible Parties: Town Board
Planning Board

V. NEXT STEPS

A. Follow-Up Plans

1) Complete the concurrent efforts of updating the Town's Zoning Regulations and map. Out of date zoning and subdivision statutes often hinder a community from achieving its vision for the future. These statutes are the regulatory tools that put into practice the vision set forth in the comprehensive plan. Ensure that the Zoning Law is in-line with the goals set forth in this plan.

- 2) Establish a committee to develop a town wide greenway, trails, multi-modal plan, with coordinated designation and signage for points of interest. Integrate existing and proposed recreation areas.
- 3) Consult with the Ulster County Planning Boards – Transportation Strategies for Quality Communities Primer.
- 4) Develop an Infrastructure/Utilities Improvement Plan
- 5) Develop a Communications Infrastructure Plan.
- 6) Evaluate the need for a community facility.
- 7) Periodic updates to this Comprehensive Plan to stay current with the needs and desires of the Town of Shandaken. The point at which revisions to the Plan should be made can vary greatly with the time needed to implement recommended action plans and with the degree and speed at which changes in the Town take place. It is recommended that, at a minimum, this plan be reviewed at 5-year intervals, to determine if revisions need to be made.

Priorities

The following recommended actions should be given the highest priority for implementation:

- 1) Amendments/revisions to the Zoning Law, land use regulations, site, and development guidelines. Overlay district should be developed to encourage appropriate development in suitable areas.
- 2) Develop and implement a Communications Infrastructure Plan.
- 3) Work with FEMA, AWSMP, and other agencies for flood control.
- 4) Establish/work with existing Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations.
- 5) Map desired growth areas, identify potential development parcels and desired types of developments.
- 6) Develop incentives to attract desired development types.
- 7) Develop a professional brochure, promoting the Town.
- 8) Develop and implement a Comprehensive Utility Plan.
- 9) Organize and promote events in the Hamlets.
- 10) Identify needed road and safety improvements.
- 11) Develop a regional roundtable to work on the critical environmental vs. development issues.

Figure 1. Land Use Patterns

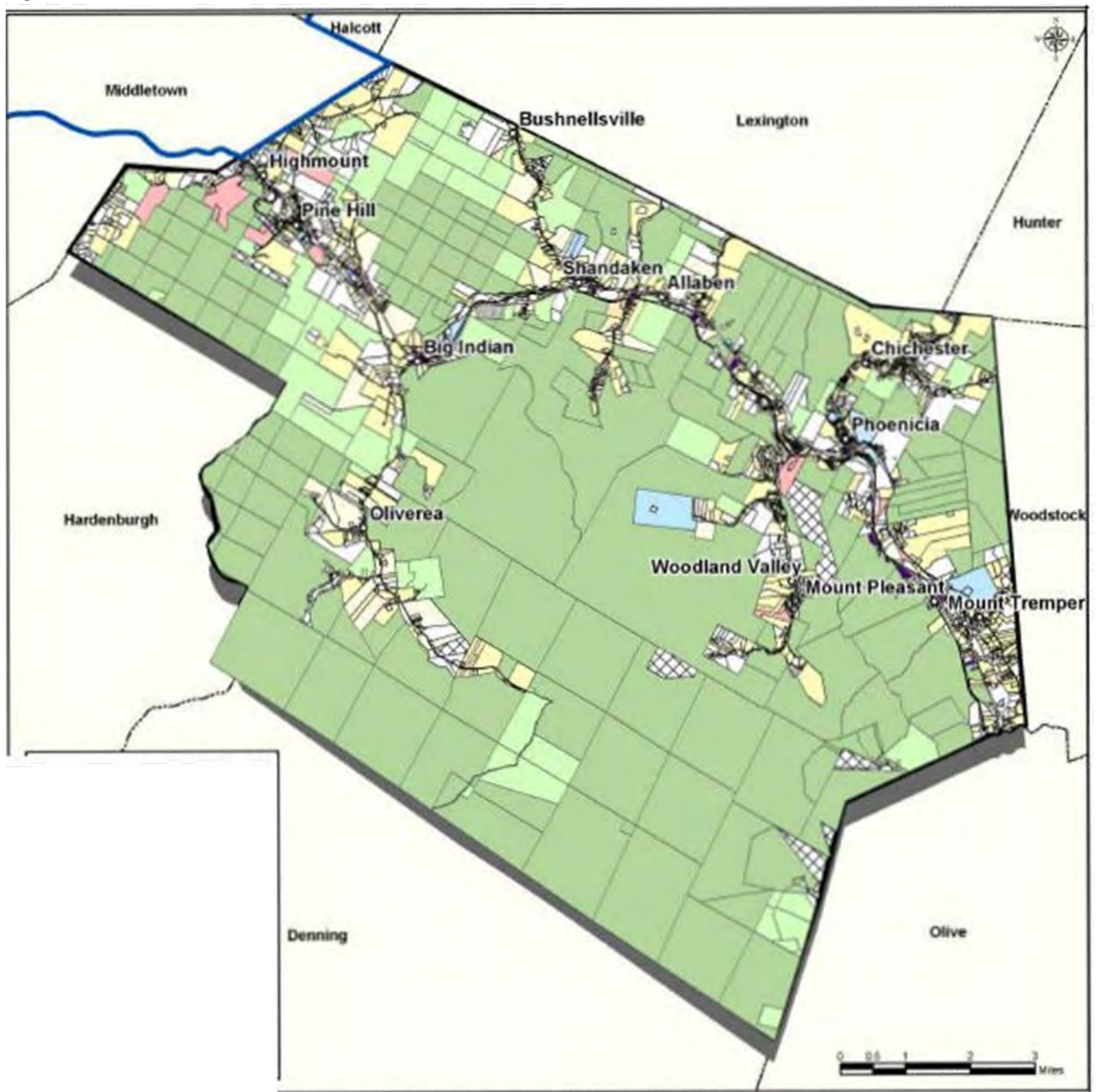


Figure 2. Existing Zoning

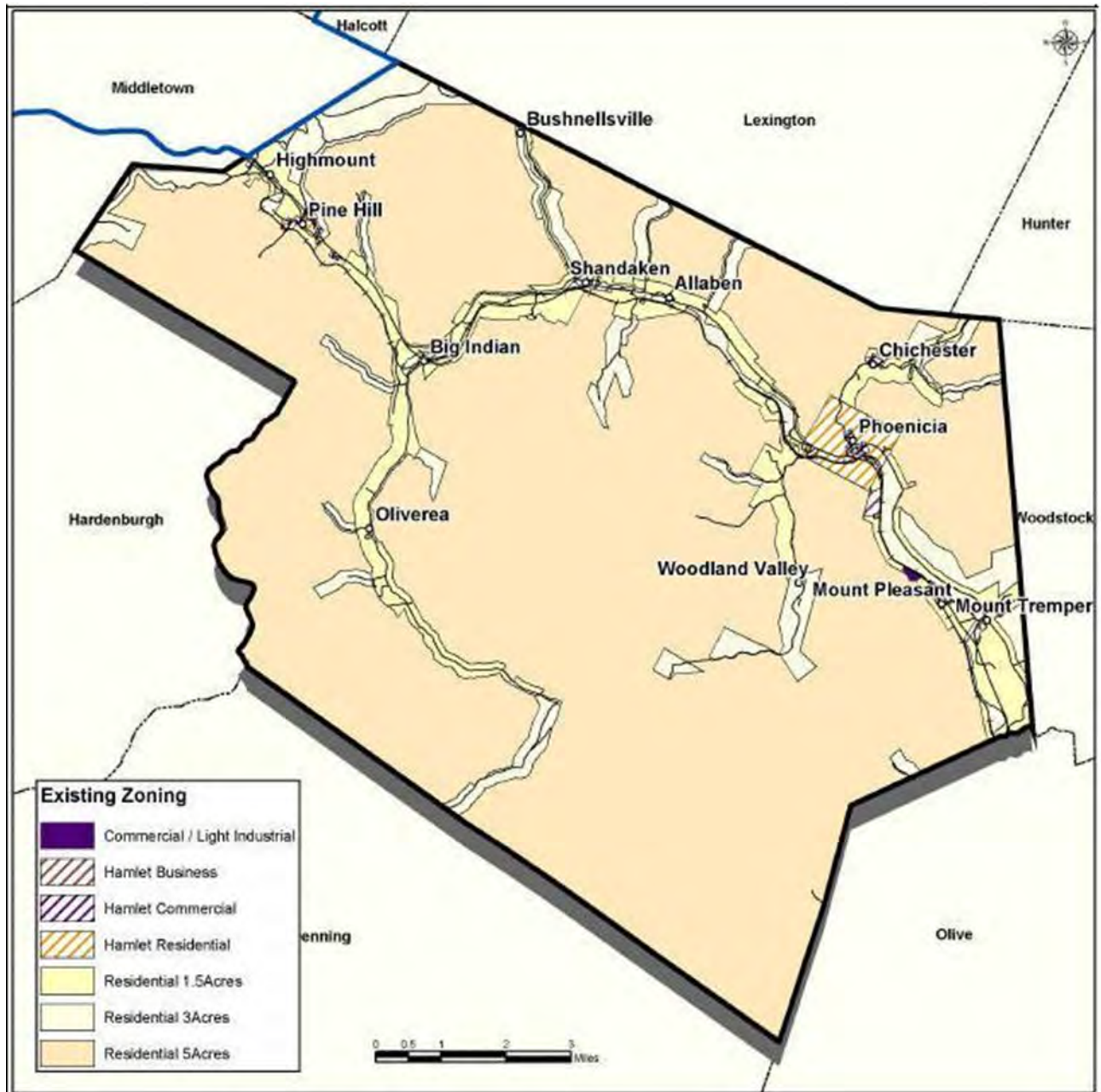


Figure 3a – Pine Hill Designated Hamlet Areas (source: NYCDEP)

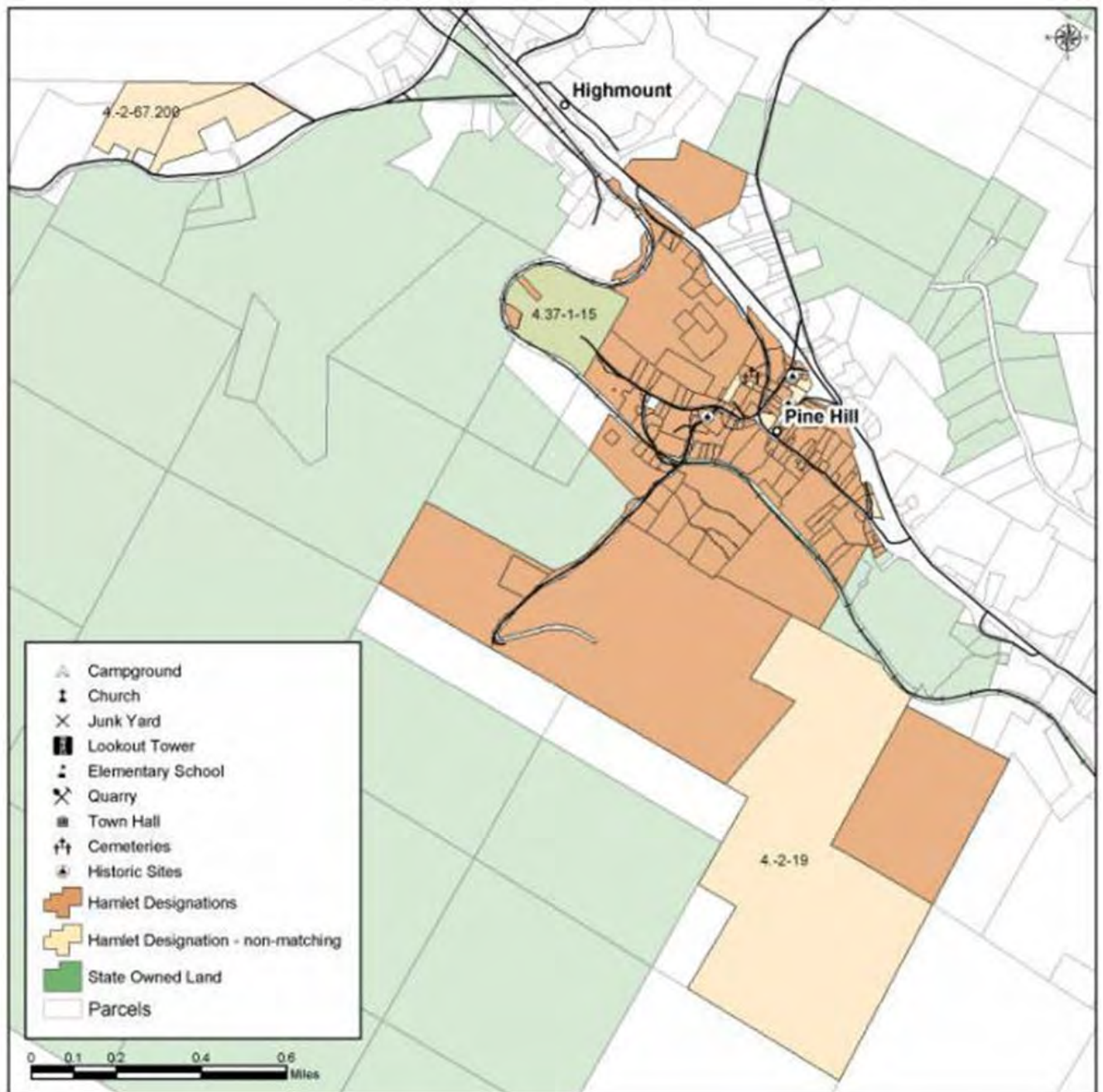


Figure 3b – Big Indian Designated Hamlet Areas (source: NYCDEP)

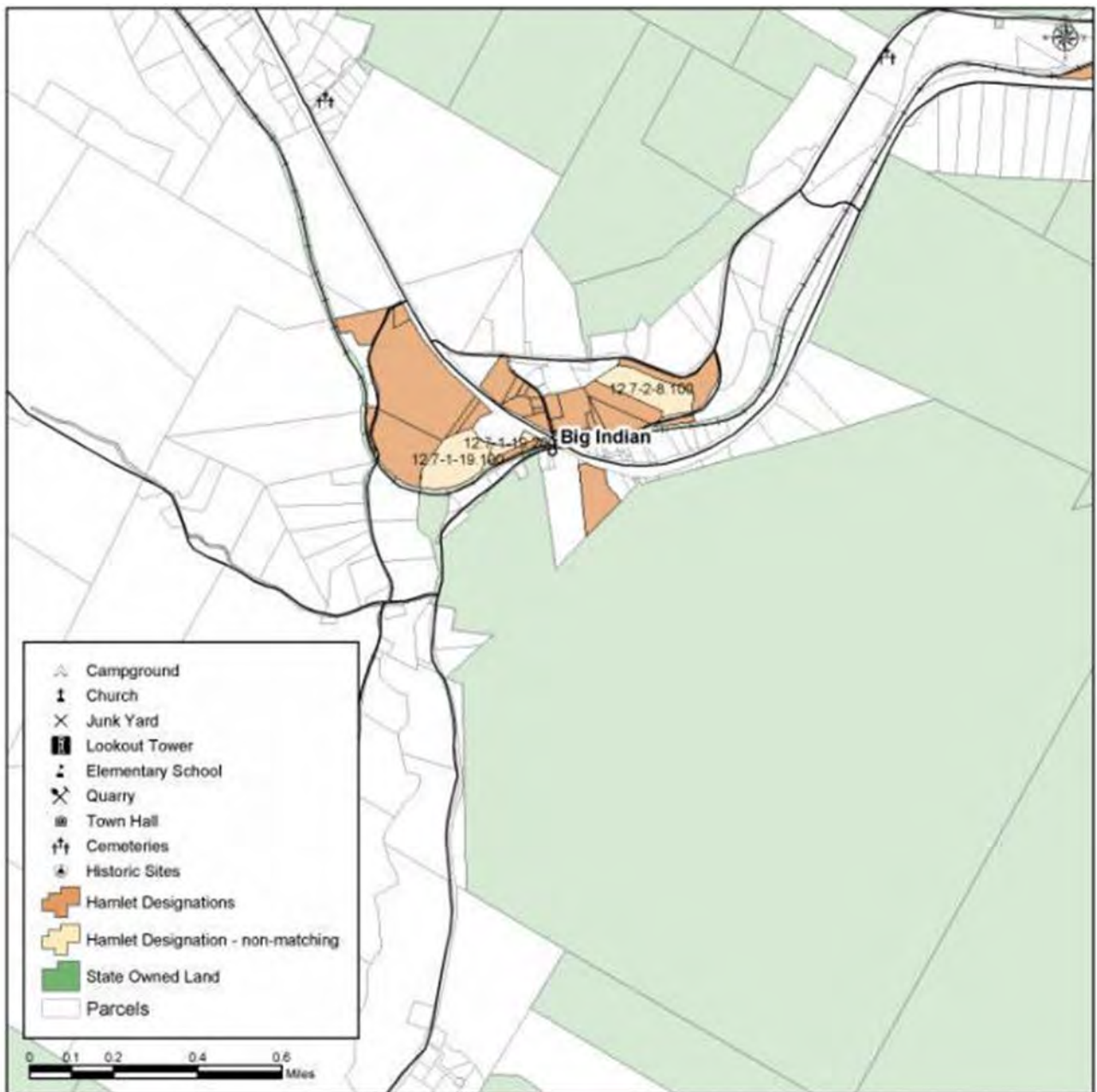


Figure 3c - Shandaken Designated Hamlet Areas (source: NYCDEP)

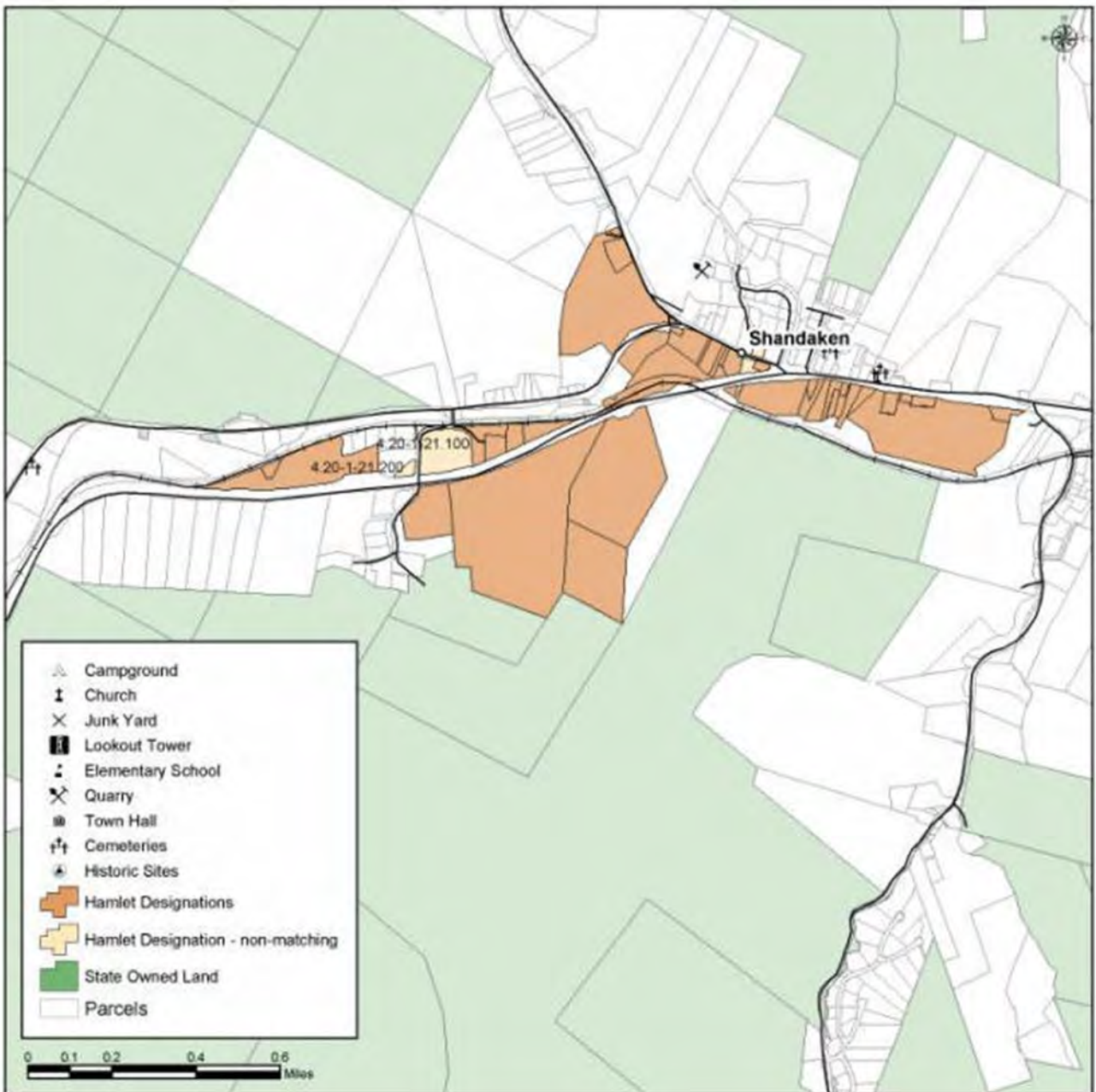


Figure 3d - Allaben Designated Hamlet Areas (source: NYCDEP)



Figure 3e - Phoenicia Designated Hamlet Areas (source: NYCDEP)

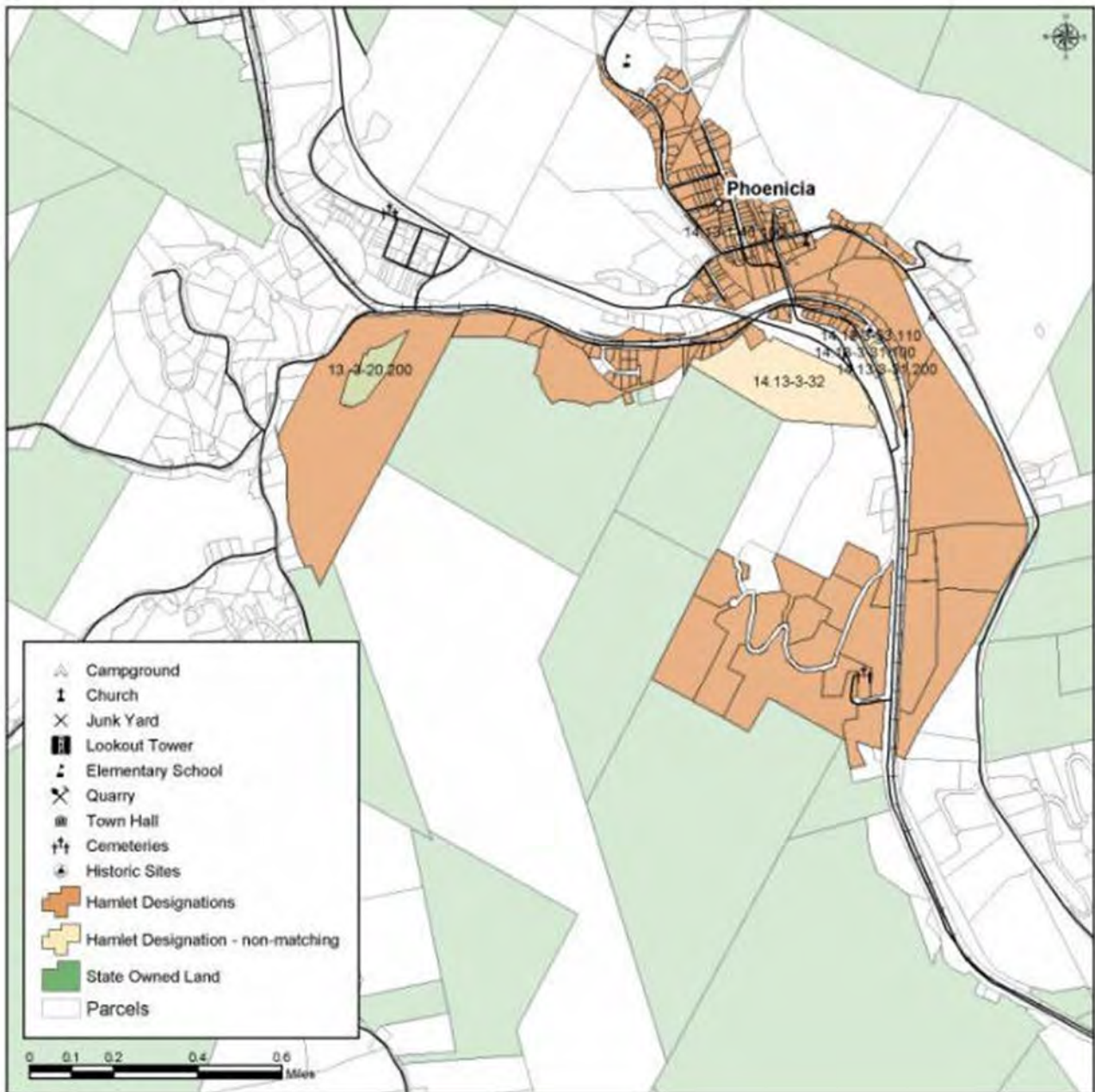


Figure 3f - Chichester Designated Hamlet Areas (source: NYCDEP)

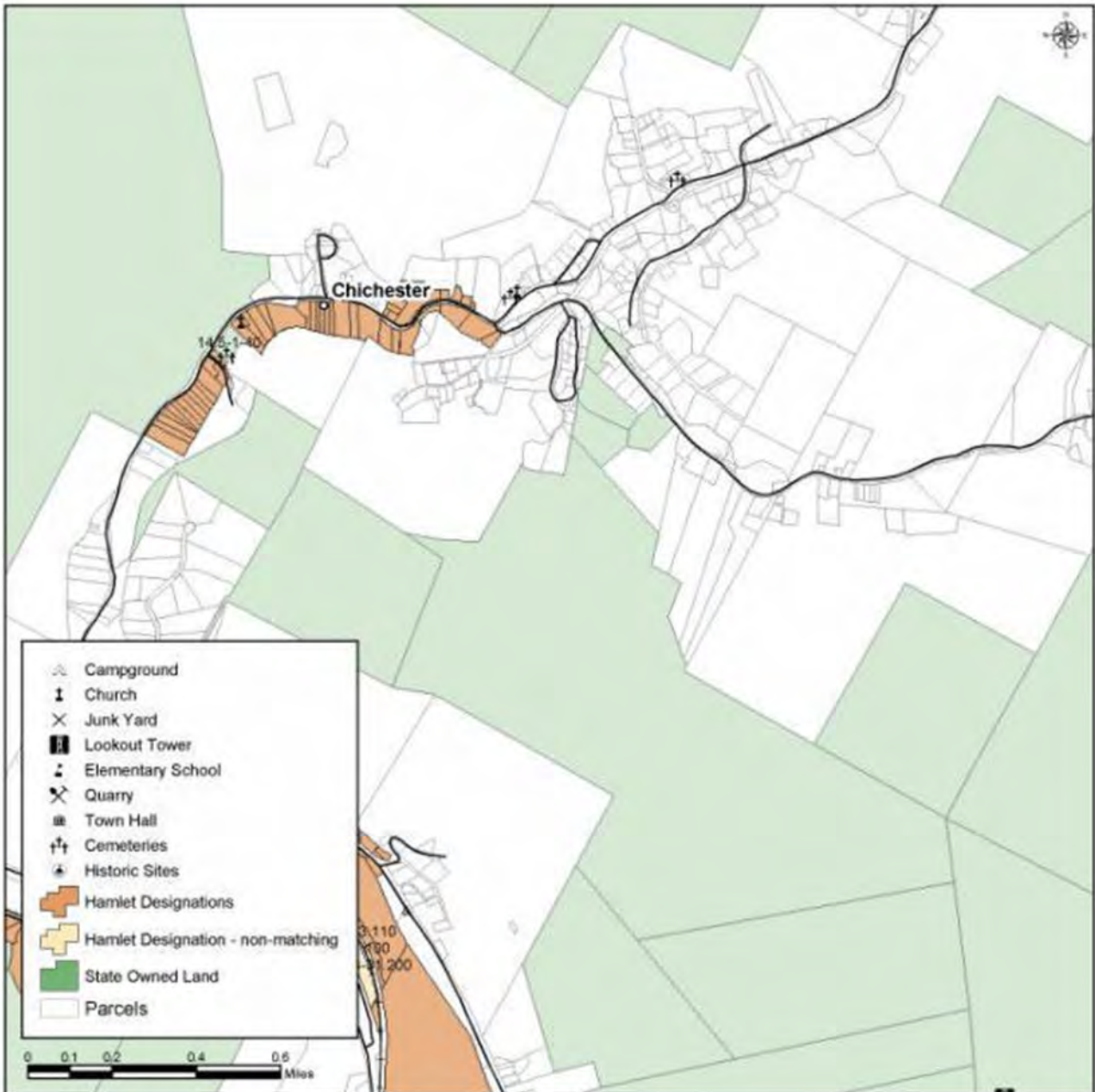


Figure 3g – Mount Tremper Designated Hamlet Areas (source: NYCDEP)

