

**Comprehensive Plan Update Phase I
Needs Assessment and Community Visioning Report**

Town of Plattekill, New York

Prepared for
Town of Plattekill
1915 Route 44-55
Modena, New York

August 2019

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Comprehensive Plan Update Phase I
Needs Assessment and Community Visioning Report

Final Report
August 2019

Funded, in part, by
Hudson River Valley Greenway

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1915 Route 44-55
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Introduction

The 2019 *Needs Assessment and Community Visioning Report* serves as the first phase in an effort to update the Town of Plattekill’s Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of comprehensive plans is authorized by Town Law § 272-a. The Town’s Comprehensive Plan was first adopted by the Town Board in 1973 and was later updated in 1993, 1998, and 2003. An update to the Comprehensive Plan was needed to help guide and enforce development with appropriate contemporary policy recommendations and update measures to conserve the Town’s natural areas and wildlife. This report was funded by the Hudson River Valley Greenway and the Town of Plattekill.

In early 2019, the Town Board established a nine-person Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) to guide the Town’s consulting team, Barton & Loguidice (B&L) in addressing the important challenges facing Plattekill. A kick-off meeting was held in April 2019 to develop an initial list of goals, objectives, and recommendations. The scope of services established at the kick-off meeting included: having an analysis of existing planning documents, on-going initiatives, data collection including GIS Mapping and US Census Bureau data analysis; holding two public workshops; performing a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis; presenting a draft community, vision, goals, and objectives; and composing a community profile and visioning report.



Figure 1 Hurds Family Farm
Photo by Patrick Rose



Methodology

In order to develop a comprehensive *Needs Assessment and Community Visioning Report*, different methods were used to gather information. Various planning documents were consulted, including the Town’s 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Land Use and Zoning Maps were analyzed and can be found in Appendix A. An inventory, which can be found in the next chapter, was performed and it examined topics such as general demographics, housing characteristics, and economic characteristics. Public engagement was another critical strategy used to gather information. Documentation supporting the public engagement effort can be found in Appendix B.

Due to high public attendance at the kick-off meeting in April 2019, a Town-Hall style public discussion began and preliminary goals and objectives were established. The kick-off meeting served as one of the two public workshops. The second public workshop was held in June 2019. The public workshops were an effective strategy that gathered valuable information about what residents value in their community, concerns they have, and the vision they have for Plattekill’s future.

The other public engagement strategy used was an online community survey. The survey was a useful tool because it had the potential to reach a wider audience than those who only attended public meetings. It is also an efficient way to measure public opinion on various topics. The survey had open ended questions, areas for comments, and covered topics such as land conservation, economic development, water/sewer/transportation infrastructure, and community character.

The Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) conducted a series of meetings that were open to the public. The purpose of the CPUC meetings were to prioritize issues and goals that were gathered at the public workshops and from the community survey.



Figure 2 Visioning Workshop 6.4.19



Community Background/History

The history of Plattekill is predated by relatively vague accounts of Native American activity associated with the Delaware or Leni-Lenape, more recently referred to as the Esopus Indians, who were known to be active along the Wallkill River Valley. European settlement of the area began in the late 1600s and early 1700s through land patents from the English Governor of New York. With an act of the New York State Legislature, Plattekill was divided from the Town of Marlborough to the east and became the ninth town in Ulster County on March 21, 1800. At the time of its incorporation as a Town, the population was an estimated 1,600 and was focused on the area's farming heritage

Agricultural History

Named after the Platte Kill stream in the southwestern portion of the Town, Plattekill has an agricultural heritage worth noting. By the mid-1800s, the Town had become the center of a larger region's prominent fruit growing. Initially dominated by grape growing including such varieties as Isabella and Catawba, and later Concord, Niagara and Delaware, grapes along with raspberries and currants, were particularly important into the 1900s. In the Village of Clintondale, the decline of grape growing is related to the loss of readily available fertilizing horse manure from New York City in the mid-twentieth century, as the car overtook horse and wagon as the primary means of transportation.



Figure 3 18th Century Dutch Barn in Plattekill, NY



With improved railroad access to markets, dairying grew as an occupation, with creameries near many of the region's rail stations, including Elting's Corner. However, it has been apple growing that has dominated the past century, with orchards steadily growing in size to compete. Indeed, much of the Town's twentieth century history is punctuated by dramatic weather changes such as early freezes, hail storms, or hurricanes affecting fruit crops (a key to the local economy).

Cold storage of fruit started later in the nineteenth century and became a critical element of fruit production and marketing which survives today. Originally reliant on local ice harvesting, larger refrigerated buildings were soon built. Farms learned the value of shared storage. Early cooperative efforts, such the Clintondale Fruit Growers Co-op, Inc., broadened from storage and helped local growers to better compete in buying, storage and marketing into the 1940s. Today, Plattekill's landscape and economy is still dominated by orchards, irrigation ponds and storage buildings of the fruit business.

Railroad Era

Subsequent growth in Plattekill was spurred by its railroad era, beginning in 1887 with the incorporation and opening of the Hudson Connecting Railroad. That line served to link the new Hudson River railroad bridge at Poughkeepsie with the main rail line through Orange County south at Campbell Hall. With depots in Modena and outside Clintondale, these two hamlets experienced noticeable development in the early twentieth century. Since the 1950s, Plattekill has seen spurts of residential and agricultural development throughout the Town, linked to the region's economy and improved accessibility to the larger Hudson Valley and New York metropolitan regions via the nearby New York State Thruway and Interstate 84.

Las Villas

From the late 1920s to the early 1980s, Las Villas were Spanish resorts located in the Town of Plattekill where Spaniards, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and other Spanish-speaking immigrants came from mostly New York City to reconnect with their families and heritage. Today, the resorts are closed, abandoned, and in some cases have been demolished.



VILLA RODRIGUEZ
PLATTEKILL, NEWBURGH 375 J 2

Figure 4 Postcard advertising Villa Rodriguez, in Plattekill, NY, c. 1935.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/spanish-resorts-n-y-catskills-remembering-lost-era-n164576>



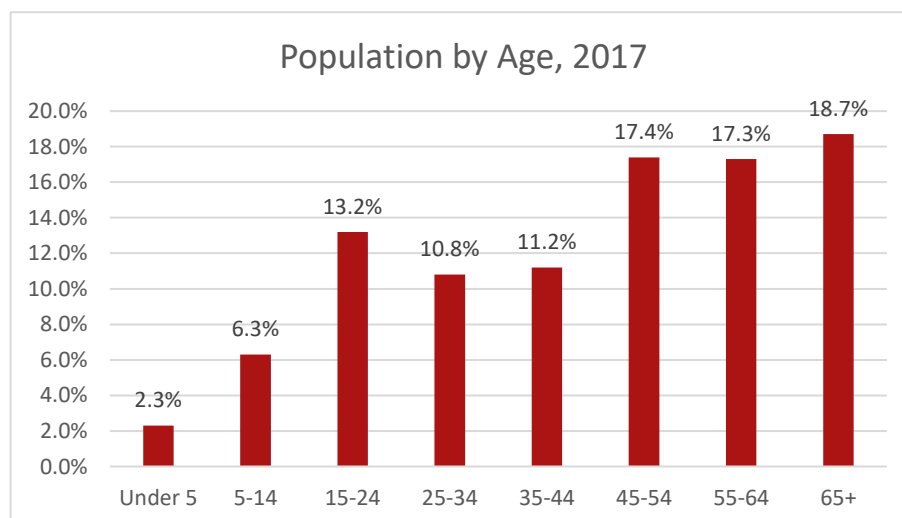
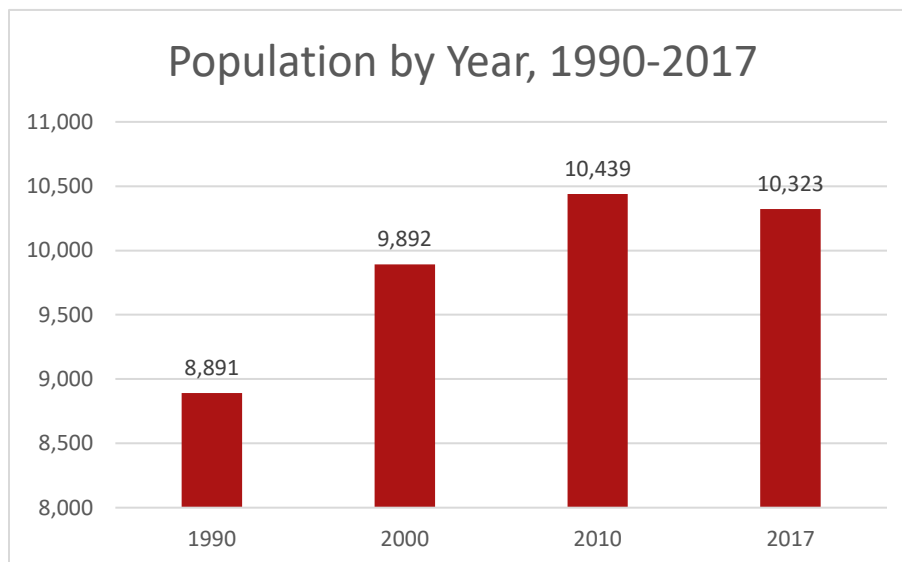
Inventory and Analysis

Location

The Town of Plattekill is located in southeast Ulster County and is about four (4) miles west of the Hudson River. The Town is bisected by Interstate 87 (running north-south NY State Route 32(running north-north) and U.S. Route 44 (running east-west).

General Demographics

The population of Plattekill was on a consistent rise from 1990 to 2010 and has remained relatively stable since 2010. Population change can have a direct impact on service required at both the local and regional levels. Changes in population require corresponding changes to infrastructure, housing, and community resources such as schools and libraries.

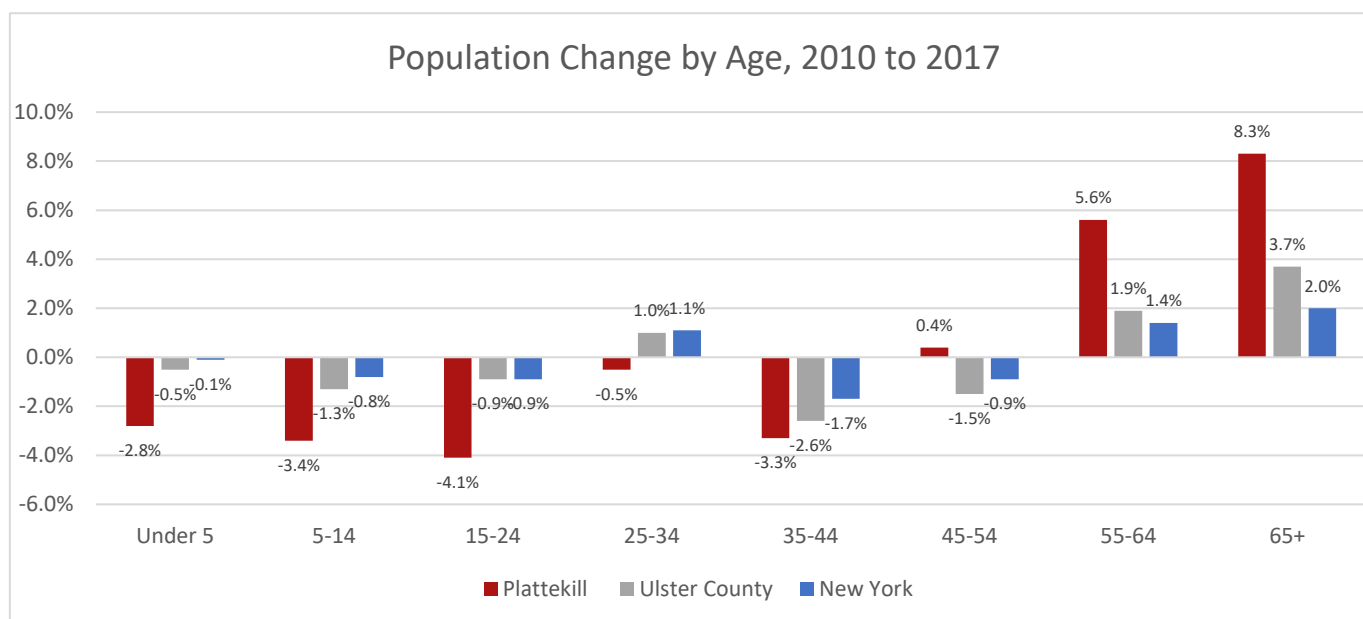




Median age rose in Plattekill by 29.6% since 2010 which has been common in rural population centers with the aging Baby Boomer generation. These numbers are also reflected in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 3 shows that the majority of the population is over the age of 45 and the largest age group, 65+, makes up 18.7% of the population. Figure 3 shows that the largest increase in age groups since 2000 have been in the 55-64 and 65+ age groups. It is imperative that the Town’s vision and goals take into account the community’s aging population. Promoting an age friendly community not only benefits seniors, but the population as a whole. Figure 3 also displays the significant decrease of age groups 25-34 and 35-44. Developing strategies which attract young age cohorts will be essential to the Town’s economic survival in the future.

T1. POPULATION / AGE, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2010	2017	2010-2017 Change
Total Population	10,439	10,323	-1.1%
Median Age	37.2	48.2	29.6%
Female Median Age	39.3	49.8	+10.8 yrs
Male Median Age	35.1	47.0	+11.9 yrs

T2. POPULATION	Town of Plattekill	Ulster County	New York State
2010	10,439	182,782	19,229,752
2017	10,323	180,129	19,798,228
% Change in Population	-1.1%	-1.5%	3.0%





As referenced in Tables 3 and 4, the Town of Plattekill’s total population is 76.0% white, the Town’s next largest ethnicity is Latino at 13.4% of the population, Black or African American is at 6.3% of the population, two or more races is at 2.1%, Asian is at 1.6%, and some other race alone at 0.6%. Ethnic groups that experienced the most significant change since 2010 were the white and Latino categories. The white population has increased by 9.9% while the Latino population has decreased by 10.2%. Despite the decrease in the Latino population, Plattekill still has a higher amount of Latinos (13.4%) compared to Ulster County (9.8%).

T3. RACE OF POPULATION, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2010		2017		Change in %
Total:	10,439		10,323		-1.1%
White alone	6896	66.1%	7842	76.0%	9.9%
Latino	2467	23.6%	1383	13.4%	-10.2%
Black or African American alone	823	7.9%	653	6.3%	-1.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Asian alone	195	1.9%	167	1.6%	-0.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race alone	0	0.0%	59	0.6%	0.6%
Two or more races:	58	0.6%	219	2.1%	1.6%

T4. RACE OF POPULATION, 2017	Town of Plattekill	Ulster County
White alone	76.0%	79.8%
Hispanic or Latino:	13.4%	9.8%
Black or African American alone	6.3%	5.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.0%	0.1%
Asian alone	1.6%	2.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	0.1%
Some other race alone	0.6%	0.3%
Two or more races:	2.1%	2.7%



Housing Characteristics

Understanding housing trends and conditions can help guide policy makers and initiatives that influence the quality, supply, and diversity of housing opportunities in order to maintain Plattekill as a desirable place to live. Housing tenure, housing age, and monthly housing costs are all important factors that will be covered in this section. They indicate a community's ability to support and absorb changes in population.

Table 5 displays that housing tenure numbers have had positive results from 2010 to 2017 with the total housing units increasing by 3.7%, vacant housing units decreasing by 3.2%, and owner-occupied housing increasing by 11%.

T5. HOUSING TENURE	Town of Plattekill			Ulster County	New York
	2010	2017	Change in %, 2010-2017	Change in %, 2010-2017	Change in %, 2010-2017
Total Housing Units	4110	4264	3.7%	2.0%	2.5%
Occupied housing units	3720	3994	7.4%	-2.9%	-1.0%
Owner-occupied	2526	3151	11.0%	-1.2%	-0.2%
Renter-occupied	1194	843	-11.0%	1.2%	0.2%

Based on data in Table 6, as of 2017 51.6% of Plattekill's housing stock was built after 1980. This is an increase of 4.5% since 2010 when 47.1% of the Town's housing structures were built after 1980. Another significant piece of data from Table 6 is the increase of structures converted to multi-family homes. Specifically, structures built from 1960 to 1969 increased by 6.2% since 2010 meaning 272 units were added to existing structures.

T6. YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2010		2017		2010-2017
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Change in %
Total housing units	4,110		4264		3.7%
Built 2010 or later	0	0	106	2.5%	2.5%
Built 2000 to 2009	575	14.0%	657	15.4%	1.4%
Built 1990 to 1999	540	13.1%	609	14.3%	1.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	820	20.0%	829	19.4%	-0.6%
Built 1970 to 1979	646	15.7%	666	15.6%	-0.1%
Built 1960 to 1969	276	6.7%	548	12.9%	6.2%
Built 1950 to 1959	492	12.0%	272	6.4%	-5.6%
Built 1940 to 1949	156	3.8%	104	2.4%	-1.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	605	14.7%	473	11.1%	-3.6%



Housing Cost Burden

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines cost burdened families as those who pay more than 30% of their income for housing. Families who are cost burdened may have trouble affording everyday necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. As higher income households maintain high housing costs as a lifestyle choice, lower income households may find it difficult to meet their non-housing needs should rent/mortgage payments exceed 30% of household income.

Data in Table 7 shows that housing affordability in the Town of Plattekill is improving as of 2017. Households paying more than 30% of household income has decreased 13.5% since 2010 while households paying less than 20% of household income has increased 19.2%. These are positive figures for Plattekill. Data in Table 8 shows that the Town lags behind Ulster County and New York State when it comes to housing burden and affordability figures, but not significantly.

T7. HOUSING BURDEN, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL					
Rent/housing Payment as % of Household Income	2010		2017		2010-2017
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Change in %
Less than 20.0 percent	628	25.2%	1393	44.4%	19.2%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	205	8.2%	276	8.8%	0.6%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	457	18.4%	358	11.4%	-7.0%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	211	8.5%	289	9.2%	0.7%
35.0 percent or more	988	39.7%	822	26.2%	-13.5%
Total	2489		3138		

T8. HOUSING BURDEN			
Rent/housing Payment as % of Household Income, 2017	Town of Plattekill	Ulster County	New York
Less than 20.0 percent	44.4%	45.9%	49.1%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	8.8%	12.4%	12.2%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	11.4%	10.3%	8.9%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	9.2%	7.0%	6.3%
35.0 percent or more	26.2%	24.5%	23.5%



Economic Characteristics

An area's economic well-being is in part measured by employment and income characteristics. Residents that are able to invest money in local establishments contributes to the overall stability and health of the community. The ability to invest in the local community is linked, in part, to earning and job security. Low incomes may be indicative of a community in need of additional resources, including job training or financial mentoring, or services such as affordable daycare. Income diversity within a community promotes vibrancy and can help reduce the uniform appearance associated with homogeneous places.

Employment status figures in Tables 9 and 10 display a mixed economic climate in Plattekill. Since 2010, there has been a decrease in the labor force of 7.2%, a 1.8% decrease of people employed, but a reduction in the unemployment rate of 5.3%. Part of this could be due to the increased population change among people aged 55+. As these groups age out of the labor force, unemployment and labor force participation can decrease as well.

T9. EMPLOYMENT STATUS, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2010		2017		2010-2017
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	% Change
Population 16 years and over	8418		8954		6.3%
In labor force	5703	67.7%	5414	60.50%	-7.2%
Civilian labor force	5691	67.6%	5414	60.50%	-7.1%
Employed	5021	59.6%	5176	57.80%	-1.8%
Unemployed	670	8.0%	238	2.70%	-5.3%
Armed Forces	12	0.1%	0	0.00%	-0.1%
Not in labor force	2715	32.3%	3540	39.50%	7.2%
Civilian labor force	5691		5414		-4.8%
Percent Unemployed	(X)	11.8%	(X)	4.40%	-7.4%

T10. EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 2017	Town of Plattekill	Ulster County	New York
Population 16 years and over	8954	151,327	16,080,981
In labor force	60.5%	61.70%	63.30%
Civilian labor force	60.5%	61.60%	63.10%
Employed	57.8%	57.20%	58.90%
Unemployed	2.7%	4.40%	4.30%
Armed forces	0.0%	0.10%	0.1%
Not in labor force	39.5%	38.30%	36.7%



While employment status indicates mixed trends, household income figures cast a positive light as depicted in Tables 11 and 12. Median household income has increased 13.2% and mean household income has increased 25.2%. This is a good trend overall, but with the number of employed people decreasing this may also mean a growing income gap is occurring between high earners and low earners. Poverty rates have also shown positive trends in the Town. As shown in Table 13, among all families and children the poverty rate has dropped 2.5% and 4.4%, respectively. Table 14 shows Plattekill as having lower poverty rates than the County and State in all categories except when comparing ‘all families’ to the County.

T11. HOUSEHOLD INCOME, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2010	2017	2010-2017
	Estimate	Estimate	% Change
Total Households	3720	3994	7.4%
Median household income	\$54,529	\$61,702	13.2%
Mean household income	\$66,741	\$83,562	25.2%

T12. HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2017	Town of Plattekill	Ulster County	New York
Total Households	3,994	43,393	7,302,710
Median household income	\$61,702	\$61,652	\$62,765
Mean household income	\$83,562	\$80,754	\$93,443

T13. POVERTY, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2012	2017	2012-2017
	%	%	% Change
All people	12.1%	10.8%	-1.3%
All families	10.3%	7.8%	-2.5%
Under 18	16.3%	11.9%	-4.4%

T14. POVERTY, 2017	Town of Plattekill	Ulster County	New York
All people	10.8%	13.2%	15.1%
All families	7.8%	7.6%	11.3%
Under 18	11.9%	15.9%	21.3%

Industry

As shown in Table 15, More than a quarter of Plattekill is employed in “education services, and health care and social assistance.” This sector has increased by 5.7% since 2010, indicating the Town’s labor force has not diversified much in seven (7) years. The next two largest sectors are “health care and social assistance” at 13.9% and “educational services” at 13.8%. “Educational services” had the most growth since 2010 at 5.8%. “Accommodation and food services” experienced the greatest loss of employment since 2010, shrinking 6.6%, “arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services” shrunk 5.9%, and “retail trade” decreased 5.0%.



T15. INDUSTRY, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2010		2017		2010-2017
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	% Change
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	5021		5176		3.1%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	73	1.5%	47	0.9%	-0.5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	73	1.5%	47	0.9%	-0.5%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	371	7.4%	417	8.1%	0.7%
Manufacturing	352	7.0%	358	6.9%	-0.1%
Wholesale trade	126	2.5%	229	4.4%	1.9%
Retail trade	773	15.4%	539	10.4%	-5.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	534	10.6%	494	9.5%	-1.1%
Transportation and warehousing	447	8.9%	462	8.9%	0.0%
Utilities	87	1.7%	32	0.6%	-1.1%
Information	112	2.2%	23	0.4%	-1.8%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	231	4.6%	321	6.2%	1.6%
Finance and insurance	118	2.4%	247	4.8%	2.4%
Real estate and rental and leasing	113	2.3%	74	1.4%	-0.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	267	5.3%	493	9.5%	4.2%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	143	2.8%	356	6.9%	4.0%
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0.0%	13	0.3%	0.3%
Administrative and support and waste management services	124	2.5%	124	2.4%	-0.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	1105	22.0%	1433	27.7%	5.7%
Educational services	400	8.0%	714	13.8%	5.8%
Health care and social assistance	705	14.0%	719	13.9%	-0.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:	691	13.8%	409	7.9%	-5.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	34	0.7%	71	1.4%	0.7%
Accommodation and food services	657	13.1%	338	6.5%	-6.6%
Other services, except public administration	137	2.7%	185	3.6%	0.8%
Public administration	249	5.0%	228	4.4%	-0.6%



Mode to Work

Most Town residents (88.0%) rely on their car, truck or van to get to work (See Table 16). Carpooling (4.7%), worked at home (2.6%), public transit (2.5%), and walk (1.2%) appear to be less used transportation options. Table 17 shows that as of 2017, mean travel time to work has increased by 1 minute from 29.6 minutes in 2010 to 30.6 minutes in 2017.

There are two (2) major bus routes that have stops in the Town; the X Route and the W Route. The X Route runs from New Paltz to Newburgh and stops in Modena at the intersection of 32 and 44/55, and at the Plattekill Post Office at the intersection of 32 and 13. The W Route runs from New Paltz to Plattekill and has stops in Modena at the intersection of 32 and 44/55, the intersection of 32 and New Hurley Road, and the Plattekill Post Office at the intersection of 32 and 13.

T16. COMMUTING TO WORK, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2017	
	Estimate	Percent
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	4487	88.0%
Car, truck, or van -- carpoled	237	4.7%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	127	2.5%
Walked	62	1.2%
Other means	48	0.9%
Worked at home	135	2.6%
Total Workers 16 years and older	5096	

T17. MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	2010	2017
In Minutes	29.6	30.6

Vehicle Availability

Based on data from 2017, 95.1% of occupied housing units have one of more vehicles available (See Table 18). This correlates with the high percentage of people driving to work. No vehicles are available in 2.5% of owner-occupied housing units while 14.0% of renter-occupied units do not have access to at least one vehicle.

T18. VEHICLE AVAILABILITY, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL, 2017	Owner occupied		Renter occupied		Occupied Housing	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Total	%
No vehicle available	79	2.5%	118	14.0%	197	4.9%
1 vehicle available	733	23.3%	435	51.6%	1,168	29.2%
2 vehicles available	1126	35.7%	183	21.7%	1,309	32.8%
3 vehicles available	1213	38.5%	107	12.7%	1320	33.0%
Total	3151		843		3,994	



Land Use

Understanding the pattern of existing land uses as well as the zoning regulations that are currently guiding development are important factors when considering potential redevelopment scenarios for the Town of Plattekill. Examining this information can assist in identifying how new development can best fit into the existing land use pattern and indicate where potential changes might be required to achieve the community’s vision.

Table 19 divides the Town of Plattekill’s land use into ten (10) categories breaks them down by number/percent of acres and number/percent of parcels. The Town’s primary use is residential and agricultural. These are not uncommon traits for this area of the Hudson Valley which is generally rural-suburban. A few noteworthy land use categories in Plattekill include its prevalence of vacant parcels and lack of industrial parcels. Vacant parcels make up 33.2% of the Town’s physical space. This presents opportunities for both conservation and development, two strategies the Town is prioritizing. On the other hand, less than 0.01% of the Town is currently dedicated to industrial uses. This presents opportunity to attract more industry to the Town, especially in vacant industrial spaces.

T19. LAND USE CATEGORY, TOWN OF PLATTEKILL	Acreage	%	Parcels	%
Agricultural	3104	13.4%	68	1.9%
Residential	9474	40.9%	2572	71.8%
Vacant	7679	33.2%	680	19.0%
Commercial	1361	5.9%	128	3.6%
Entertainment & Amusement	277	1.2%	5	0.1%
Community Services	249	1.1%	32	0.9%
Industrial	7	0.0%	1	0.0%
Public Services	71	0.3%	5	0.1%
Forested, Open Space, & Conservation Lands	291	1.3%	22	0.6%
No Data	649	2.8%	67	1.9%
Total	23162		3580	



Zoning

The majority of the Town of Plattekill falls under the Rural Residential (RR-1.5) district, comprising 34.4% of the Town as shown in Table 20. Agriculture is the second largest district making up 21.1% of the Town. The business districts (BD-40, BD-60, GB-80) are situated near the Town’s hamlets and along major roads. Zoning could be modified to promote commercial and industrial development in or immediately adjacent to existing hamlets.

T20. CLASSIFICATION	Acreage	%
Agriculture (AG-1.5)	4826	21.1%
Business (BD-40)	439	1.9%
Light Business (BD-60)	690	3.0%
General Business (GB-80)	288	1.3%
Mountain (M-3)	3478	15.2%
Residential Settlement (RS-1)	4190	18.3%
Hamlet Residential (HR-1)	1070	4.7%
Rural Residential (RR-1.5)	7864	34.4%
Total	22845	

Culture, Education, and Recreation

The Town of Plattekill is divided among four (4) school districts: Highland, Marlboro, New Paltz, and Walkill (see Appendix A). Walkill Central School District covers a majority of the Town. Plattekill Elementary School, Leptondale Elementary School, John G. Borden Middle School, and Walkill Senior Highschool are all within the Town and part of the Walkill District.

The Town has one public library in Modena. Organizations in the Town include Plattekill Veterans Committee, Plattekill Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Plattekill Public Library, and Clintondale Fire Dept. Auxiliary. Clubs in the Town include Plattekill Historical Preservation Society, Plattekill Senior Club, Southern Ulster Rotary Club, Southern Ulster Rotary Club, Modena Rural Cemetery Inc.

The Town of Plattekill has sites in Modena listed on the National Registers of Historic Places. There are also recreational opportunities throughout the Town such as Thomas Felton Community Park, Forest Park, Helmock Ridge Multiple Use area, New York City North / Newburgh KOA Holiday, and Paintball Sports New York.

Plattekill is well served by medical facilities in all corners of the Town. There are regional medical centers in New Paltz, Poughkeepsie, Newburgh, and Middletown. Cornerstone Family Healthcare is a family medical facility located in the Plattekill Hamlet.



Public Outreach

A critical part of creating the *Needs Assessment and Community Visioning Report* was facilitating methods that garnered the public's input. When working with Plattekill, it was important that the residents of the Town and surrounding communities were involved in the process of creating a vision and goals, and identifying issues. The main strategy used to gather the public's input for this report were public workshops and an online community survey. There was an Issues Identification Town Hall-style Meeting (April 2019), a Visioning Workshop (June 2019), and an online survey (available 7/1/2019-7/31/2019). See Appendix B for more detailed public participation information.

**TOWN OF PLATTEKILL
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
VISIONING WORKSHOP**
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To Learn More:

Where & When: Plattekill Fire House, 50 Old Firehouse Road, Plattekill, NY, 12568
Tuesday, June 4th, 2019 7:00 p.m.

What: The Town of Plattekill recently received funding from New York State's Hudson River Valley Greenway to update its Comprehensive Plan Update. The purpose of Comprehensive Plan Update is to guide future town-wide development, capital improvement planning, and planning and zoning board decisions in Plattekill. To create a well-rounded plan, participation from members of the public like you is needed. We will work together to create tactics, strategies and policy recommendations that support the goals of the community. Members of the Plattekill Master Plan Committee and its consultant Barton & Loguidice, DPC will be on hand to facilitate discussion and input.

Who Should Attend: Residents, Property Owners, Business Owners, Non-Profit Organizations, Government Officials, Advocacy Groups, and all other who are interested in the future of Plattekill are encouraged to participate in the workshop.

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**Hudson River
Valley Greenway**

Figure 5 Visioning Workshop Flyer



Issues Identification Town Hall Meeting (4/16/2019)

With such a significant public presence at the Committee Kickoff Meeting, a Town-Hall style public discussion began in order to identify community issues and opportunities. Several members of the Committee and a number of residents expressed strong preferences for the rural character of Plattekill. Specifically, the Town's connection to nature, the abundance of greenspace, the views of the Shawangunk Ridge, and that it is a quiet, safe place to live. The Town has benefitted from the lack of an exit off Interstate 87 since development pressures have bypassed it. This has helped perpetuate a dampening of the development market and enabled the Town to properly plan for desirable Smart Growth development scenarios by learning from the successes and failures of neighboring communities.

The Committee and members of the public expressed a desire to improve the local business climate to create more jobs, contribute more to the municipal tax base, try and keep young people from leaving, and provide desired services such as dining and lodging to local residents. They emphasized the need to bring more people into the Town – like the Rockinghorse Ranch does – but to also patronize other local businesses for goods and services while they are in Plattekill. Having small-scale, walkable downtowns, similar to nearby Gardiner, was indicated as a desire in the Town's hamlet areas.

The lack of grocery stores in certain areas of Town was seen as a need as well as a desire for additional dining options. Development patterns in New Paltz were seen as too robust and undesirable for Plattekill. The public expressed a desire for the establishment of an Industrial or Business Park and development of infrastructure and land to support it. This was seen as an imperative style of business that encourages job growth and increases the commercial property tax base in Plattekill.

The lack of water infrastructure to support dining, retail and other types of commercial development were identified as needs in the Town. Further infrastructure discussion included incorporating Smart Growth principles in land use regulation and planning as the ideal way to balance the preservation of rural landscapes with economic development and provision of goods and services.

In terms of recreation, the public expressed the need for greater land conservation and open space preservation efforts. There was a suggestion of utilizing the 72 acres around the Town Park as additional greenspace. There was also suggestions of converting old railroad lines to linear parks and exploring a rail-trail purchase. Jogging was acknowledged as a popular hobby in the Town but the state highways and local roads often make this a dangerous activity because road shoulders can be narrow with limited sight distance.



Visioning Workshop (6/4/2019)

The visioning workshop was formatted as a presentation, group discussion, and then an activity with stations in the back of the room where five notepads had topics and questions. The workshop gathered concerns, opportunities, and the ambitions that residents would like to see in the Town. The presentation covered the purpose of the project, scope, schedule, funding, and the goals of the visioning workshop.

Following the presentation, a discussion was facilitated with the audience to receive feedback on their vision for the future of Plattekill. Community members were asked to offer words or phrases that characterize their ideal vision for what Plattekill could look like in the future. People in the audience specifically spoke about maintaining open space, viewsheds, farmlands, and preventing pollution (including light pollution, garbage, and no dumping).

In terms of new development in the Town, residents expressed a desire to see low rise commercial / professional offices in designated areas, an industrial/business park, and tech industries. Allowing residents to 'age in place' was expressed as a need. Additionally, another related need discussed was establishing more senior housing in areas of the Town with greater density in hamlet centers such as Modena, Plattekill, Ardonia, or Clintondale.

Participants wanted more things to do within Plattekill and discussed attracting people from outside the Town. Some of these topics included retail shopping opportunities and limitations, more restaurants, less bargain department stores, more outdoor recreation options, and non-motorized connections between hamlets and surrounding communities.



Figure 6 Visioning Workshop 6.4.19



After brainstorming components of the vision statement, meeting attendees were directed to the back of the room where five stations were set up with topics including:

- economic development;
- community character;
- identity and sense of community;
- hamlet areas;
- environmental sustainability.

Near the end of the workshop, everyone was given a set of four red dots and encouraged to place the red dots next to suggestions they thought were most important.

At the **economic development** station under the types of commercial development residents would like to see, professional offices, industrial parks, and winery/craft brewery/eateries were chosen as the most important. Areas where participants would like to see commercial development was determined as around the hamlets.

At the **community character** station, participants indicated that they wanted to preserve or improve: open land, trees, rocks, wetlands, farmland, views, historic farmhouses, old villas, and walking trails. The Shawangunk Ridge, apple orchards, and views from the park were voted as the most important views to protect. At the **identity and sense of community** station participants want the Town to be viewed as the gateway to Ulster County.

The **hamlet areas** station had the most dots in terms of services people would like to see there. Participants would like to see a drive-in theater, coffee shops, shops, restaurants, taverns, beauty salons, and more things for kids. They also indicated wanting to preserve and enhance old buildings.

Finally, the **environmental sustainability** station, resources participants would like to see preserved or enhanced include fire hydrants, the water district and sanitary system in all three hamlets, the ability to use groundwater, and the Thomas Felton Community Park.

In addition to the stations, there were also three maps taped to one of the walls. Participants were able to write on the maps indicating where they would like to see new development. Attendees wrote on the land use map indicating places they would like to see industrial parks, business parks, breweries, cafés, and a small amphitheater.



Community Survey

In an effort to collect as many responses to the Town of Plattekill Community Survey, the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee provided the opportunity to submit written responses for individuals unable to access the online survey. These responses are included in this comprehensive analysis of the community comments. Approximately 135 residents participated in the survey between July 1 and 31, 2019. Detailed survey results can be found in Appendix C.

Of the respondents that participated in the Community Survey, women (53%) were slightly more inclined than men (42%) to take the survey. Generally speaking, the age of the people responding was overwhelming between the ages of 25 and 65 (94%) – fairly evenly distributed between the age brackets. Nearly half of the households contained two to three persons, of which there were no school age children.

A vast majority of these individuals worked in some capacity, either full-time or part-time (83%), and just under half of them either worked within the Town or outside of Town but within the County (43%). Approximately 74% of the individuals that submitted the survey indicated that their household income was greater than the average Median Household Income for Ulster County, which is \$63,621 (2017 US Census).

How satisfied are you living in the Town of Plattekill?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 0

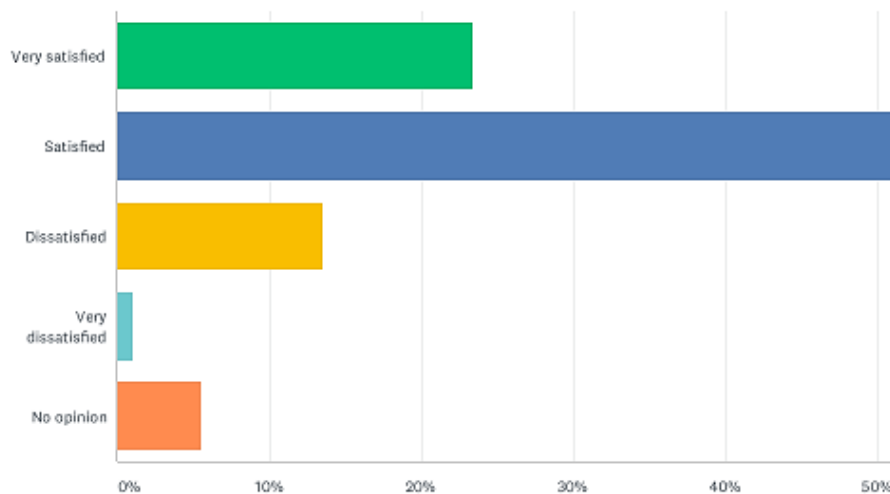


Figure 7 Online Community Survey Excerpt

Town of Plattekill Community Survey

The majority of respondents lived within the Wallkill School District (84%) and owned a single family home (86%). The distribution between the amounts of time residing in the Town was generally evenly spread out, considering the parameters of 0-5 years (28%); 6-10 years (16%); 11-20 years (29%) and over 20 years (25%). They also indicated that they were satisfied living



(82%) in the Town because of its rural nature and the quality of life it offers, as well as affordability of housing options. They felt that the essential services the Town offered (Police and Fire) added to the importance of their quality of life and hometown atmosphere, as well as Plattekill being a safe and clean environment to live in.

Overwhelmingly the respondents felt that the Town was managing their essential community services (Police and Fire) extremely well and they were offering good recreational opportunities at the Thomas Felten Town Park. They indicated that they would like to see the park expanded and be able to offer more community events (like Plattekill Day and the fireworks) and athletic opportunities. Keeping costs and taxes low, while maintaining the Towns' roads were also identified as being handled well.

The survey indicated that the residents would like to see more of a diversified mixed-use community, favoring additional retail shopping opportunities and restaurants and encouraging emphasis on growing the Towns' recreational and tourism base. Community services such as medical facilities and assisted living facilities were also noted as being an important type of commercial development within the Town.

The survey results showed that the residents favored a balance of responsible fiscal management with economic growth. They denoted the importance of controlling the property and school taxes, while offering affordable housing and preserving open space and agricultural lands within the community. Economic development was a very important critical issue that the Town needs to improve on.

In aggregate, the Community Survey validated many of the concerns voiced at the two public workshops and by the members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee. Participants expressed an interest in increased retail, services, and dining options while also preserving cherished open spaces and maintaining a low tax rate. The Committee intends to explore these issues in greater detail through additional surveys in the near future.



Vision Statement & Goals

Vision Statement

In the year 2040...

The Town of Plattekill is an oasis of rural vistas and bustling hamlets amidst the suburban and highway development areas of the Mid-Hudson Valley. Plattekill offers its residents the freedom and tranquility of open spaces paired with the convenience of access to two nearby interstate highways. Commercial areas near hamlet centers provide opportunities for entrepreneurs and job seekers alike, allowing residents to affordably reside and work within the Town.

The Town cherishes its agricultural heritage and encourages diversity and inclusion. Residents of the Town take pride in their community and support and contribute to its schools, institutions, and volunteer organizations.

The Town of Plattekill, Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC), and the consulting team arrived at this vision through extensive public participation as well as a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the Town's economy, demographics, and physical characteristics.



Figure 8 Mindard's Family Farm
Photo by Jerry Thomas



Goals

To achieve this vision, the Town of Plattekill has established a set of goals that address a wide range of issues that have been raised through the public involvement process and through the development of an inventory and analysis of existing conditions. The goals and objectives are as follows:

- A productive economy that attracts diverse industry sectors and provides a variety of housing that supports job growth and contributes to the tax base. Plattekill's low tax rate is an asset that the Town can use to attract young families. Walkable residential and commercial development will reduce commuting costs and public infrastructure costs while revitalizing Plattekill's hamlets.
- Maintain the community's character by preserving the Town's scenic views, architectural forms, and cultural & historical resources. Plattekill has many valuable historic resources such as Las Villas, historic farmlands, and hamlet areas. The historic & cultural resources are complimented by the Town's natural resources such as the Shawangunk Ridge, apple orchards, wetlands, and open space.
- Reinforce Plattekill's identity and sense of community by developing branding for the Town as the gateway to Ulster County and as an affordable community for seniors and young families, alike.
- Improve the civic infrastructure of Plattekill and its hamlet areas by maintaining infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Stabilize and strengthen hamlets of Modena, Plattekill, Ardonia, or Clintondale to ensure safe and affordable housing with walkable access to parks, schools, commercial establishments, and public transportation.



Figure 9 Town of Plattekill Veterans Memorial



Conclusion

The 2019 *Needs Assessment and Community Visioning Report* is the first phase in the update to the Town of Plattekill’s Comprehensive Plan. Changes in demographics and development patterns in Plattekill – particularly an increasing senior population and decreasing younger population – has impacted several aspects of Town life. This report is a necessary step in a comprehensive planning process that first identifies important issues and needs and then charts a course for the future of Plattekill through a vision statement coupled with supporting goals. A holistic view of these issues will prepare the Town to identify appropriate solutions to improve the economy, meet the needs of the aging population, establish opportunities to attract young families, and more. The project has been informed by the experiences of similar, surrounding communities in Ulster and Orange Counties.

Through a robust public participation process that included two public meetings, an online survey, and several Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Meetings open to the public, the Committee and residents have established a vision and goals that focus on the conservation of the Town’s natural beauty and its potential to attract and support small businesses in diverse commercial sectors. In general, a desire to preserve the community’s existing character while supporting small business growth in and around the Town’s hamlet areas of Modena, Plattekill, Clintondale, and Ardonia was expressed. This “smart growth” development scenario steers development away from scenic agricultural and forested areas and toward the hamlet areas where infrastructure already exists or could be provided at greater efficiency. Thriving hamlets benefit from walkable commercial corridors and while still maintaining accessibility to natural resources that can be enjoyed by residents and visitors of all ages.

This report documents the issues identified during the public outreach process. It also sets a heading for more tangible implementation measures such as land use policy changes and capital improvement plans through a Vision Statement and supporting Goals for the Town of Plattekill. The Town intends to use this report as Phase 1 of a two-phase Comprehensive Plan Update.