

## 3.8 Land Use

### 3.8.1 Existing Land Use

The project site is located on the eastern side of Sunset Ridge Road and the Duzine Elementary School in the Village of New Paltz, Ulster County. The project site consists of heavily wooded vacant land, with 7.45 acres of federal wetlands. Approximately 27 acres of land will be altered by the construction of this project.

A review of the Village's existing conditions, needs, concerns, and opportunities helps to define the important issues to be addressed in the Village's Comprehensive Master Plan. The Comprehensive Master Plan supports high standards for all development by permitting and promoting growth that is consistent with the Village's land suitability and capability and its existing community character.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the Village Comprehensive Master Plan, the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan was consulted to evaluate the proposed project in light of existing land use plans.

#### ***Adjacent Land Uses***

The project site is bordered on the east by a wetland complex and a tributary to the Walkkill River known as "Trib 13". A portion of the site is located within the proposed "Mill Brook Greenway" area, which is one of the last remaining major open space areas in the Village and contains substantial wetlands associated with the Walkkill River Tributary. These areas have high values for wildlife habitat, biological diversity and open space amenities. Adjacent to the Mill Brook Greenway are lands owned by the Beaverkill Conservancy (Mr. Peter Bienstock) including lands proposed for development as the Woodland Pond Continuing Care Retirement Center; subdivisions proposed on the Lent and Kniffen parcels; and remaining lands to the south of the Stoneleigh site owned by the Beaverkill conservancy which are vacant and residentially zoned.

The project site is bordered on the west, within the Town of New Paltz, by a medical office building, the Duzine School, and vacant residentially zoned land owned by Mr. Bienstock. The northerly border is adjacent to residentially zoned land which is developed for single family homes along Hummel Road.

#### ***Village of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan***

The 1994 Comprehensive Master Plan for the Village of New Paltz is a guide for the improvement of the Village and its future growth, development, and protection. The Comprehensive Master Plan reflects the needs and desires of the Village's residents, as expressed in a community values survey conducted during 1988.<sup>32</sup> As stated in the Village's Comprehensive Master Plan, the goals and objectives of the plan reflect the Village residents' desires for its future. These goals and objectives were developed through a rigorous planning process that included a public opinion survey, public meetings, and incorporation of various planning studies.<sup>33</sup> Some of these Goals and the specific recommendations found at the end of the Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan

<sup>31</sup> 1994 Village of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan.

<sup>32</sup> 1994 Village of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan.

<sup>33</sup> 1994 Village of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan.

have direct application to the Stoneleigh project. Some goals deal more directly with other resources within the Village. Where a Goal or a Recommendation has direct linkage to the Stoneleigh project, it has been addressed within this section.

The Goals are listed below:

**Goal 1:**

Accommodate a growing residential population with unique needs while preserving the quality of existing neighborhoods and their natural environment.

**Goal 2:**

Protect and enhance the drawing power of the Village's commercial and historic areas.

**Goal 3:**

Ease traffic congestion within the Village, which impedes its successful functioning, without spoiling physical and visual amenities.

**Goal 4:**

Protect the Village's important historic site, structures, and features and promote tourism development that is based upon its nationally recognized importance.

**Goal 5:**

Protect the natural environment by linking zoning regulations to site capability.

**Goal 6:**

Protect visually attractive land and strengthen scenic views.

**Goal 7:**

Provide a broad range of housing options for present and future Village residents including families with children, students and young people, the elderly, and persons who earn less than the median income.

**Goal 8:**

Provide Municipal facilities and services that will meet residents' basic needs and improve opportunities for community activities.

**Goal 9:**

Make the downtown core a dominant feature of the region by enhancing it as the center for commercial, governmental and cultural activities.

***Town of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan***

The Town of New Paltz's Comprehensive Master Plan, adopted August 1995 sets forth a development policy for the future of the Town of New Paltz. The Comprehensive Master Plan will provide the Town with an important tool to help guide future growth while protecting the community's many resources for the future.

Based upon an evaluation of the studies and assessment of the community's goals and values, the Comprehensive Plan makes recommendations in the five major sections as follow:

1. Land Use
2. Circulation and Transportation
3. Scenic and Historic District
4. Open Space and Recreation
5. Community Facilities and Public Utilities<sup>34</sup>

The 1995 Comprehensive Plan created objectives based on recommendations from the community. The goals and objectives are now proposed as follows:

**Goal 1:**

Preserve and enhance the natural beauty and rural quality of the community and protect the small-town atmosphere of the Village core.

**Goal 2:**

Protect environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources, scenic roads and vistas, waterways, floodplain and wetlands by establishing guidelines and regulating development density.

**Goal 3:**

Establish environmentally sound land use development policies to ensure a balanced and orderly pattern of growth and economic stability, with regard to the community's fiscal base, including the protection of farmland.

**Goal 4:**

Accommodate present and future population by encouraging the development of an appropriate variety and quantity of sound housing which will serve various income levels and age groups, including low and moderate income housing.

**Goal 5:**

Encourage higher density development to locate in areas served by public water and sewer facilities.

**Goal 6:**

Foster and preserve the community's heritage by protecting historic structures and sites.

**Goal 7:**

Provide adequate public utilities and recreation facilities, and minimize the fiscal burden of such services on the existing community.

**Goal 8:**

Seek all reasonable means to provide better traffic conditions and adequate parking in the center of the community and encourage circulation within secondary networks.

**Goal 9:**

---

<sup>34</sup> 1995 Town of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan

Promote environmentally sound management of the waste stream.

**Goal 10:**

Encourage regional cooperation to safeguard New Paltz's Environmental setting.

***Ulster County Land Use Planning***

The most recent land use plan for Ulster County dates to 1970. While much of the data contained within this plan is not current, the goals and objectives of the plan still serve as the officially adopted guideline for land use planning at the County level. Generally, the plan identifies trends which will impact land uses in the County:

- 1) Expected most future growth around core areas such as Ulster-Saugerties and New Paltz
- 2) Most Hamlets in the County have stagnated with the exception of New Paltz
- 3) There is a concern regarding suburban development or sprawl due to the inability of soils to support septic and groundwater supplies to provide water.

The Land Use map identifies areas for urban and rural development, as well as areas which should be maintained as open space, mostly due to the concern for environmental impacts associated with development. New Paltz has been identified as appropriate for "urban" development.

The Plan Goals are divided into 5 sections:

- 1) Open space and recreation
  - a. The plan identifies the need to provide for more recreational lands and open space within the County
- 2) Agriculture
  - a. The study identifies the importance of preservation of agricultural lands in the County
- 3) Land for development
  - a. The study identifies several specific goals:
    - i. Build where central water and sewer area available
    - ii. Cluster residential development
    - iii. Build in existing centers, not new centers
    - iv. The largest urban areas are the Kingston/Saugerties are and New Paltz.
  - b. Development within New Paltz is supported because:
    - i. The transportation system is good
    - ii. Retail, industrial, office and service support can be developed within New Paltz
    - iii. Water supply is available from the aqueducts, and sewage can be treated and discharged into the Walkill River
    - iv. New Paltz is the center of population for the southern part of the County
    - v. SUNY and historic buildings lend character to the areas
    - vi. State policy shows New Paltz as the urban center for the future
- 4) Economic base
  - a. The recreation industry is seen as the major driver for the County

5) Housing

- a. The plan recommends that the Planning Board, in its reviews, favor communities which try to alleviate the housing shortage and reject those which try to arbitrarily exclude new residents
- b. The plan recognizes that it is a necessity to provide more housing in cities and villages

Two additional planning documents, *Closing Gaps.....Opening Doors*, prepared for the Ulster County Planning Board, and *Priority Strategies to Support Housing Development in Ulster County* prepared for the Ulster County Housing Consortium were reviewed. Both of these documents identify the need for affordable housing in Ulster County.

Moving Forward: The Ulster County Transportation Plan<sup>35</sup> has been reviewed to review transportation objectives as they might apply to the Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project. The goals of this plan are to:

- 1) Develop, optimize, maintain and manage multi modal transportation services and facilities
- 2) Focus transportation investments to encourage compact land use patterns that reduce demand or provide alternatives
- 3) Offer mobility options to expand transportation capacity
- 4) Recognize the potential to manage transportation demand to address transportation connections and environmental objectives

### 3.8.2 Potential Impacts to Land Use

#### ***Adjacent Land Uses***

The Stoneleigh Woods project is consistent with both the existing and proposed land uses surrounding the site. As a residential community, the preferred development plan is consistent with the residential neighborhoods along Sunset Ridge, Bonticou View, Hummell and other adjacent roadways, and will be consistent with potential residential development on the currently undeveloped parcels owned or controlled by Mr. Bienstock. The adjacent proposed Woodland Pond Continuing Care Retirement Center offers an additional option for the seniors within the age-restricted Stoneleigh Woods housing. As these residents age, and face the need for more intensive medical care, Woodland Pond represents an ideal next life stage, while staying within the same environmental setting.

The adjacent school and office building are consistent with the Village, Town and County's goals of locating new residential uses near existing services. Children from the non-age-restricted townhouses will be in very close proximity to the Duzine School; all residents will be in very close proximity to the medical uses within the adjacent office building at the end of Sunset Ridge Road. Proximity to these uses will serve as an incentive to reduce vehicular traffic on the New Paltz roadways.

---

<sup>35</sup> *Moving Forward: The Ulster County Transportation Plan*, April 2003 prepared for the Ulster County Planning Board

***Village of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan***

**Goal 1:**

The Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project addresses the growing need for senior and affordable housing. A detailed review of how this need is met is included in Section 1.4 above.

**Goal 2:**

The Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project does not directly impact this goal. However, the residents of the project will likely shop in the vicinity of their residence, aiding the stability of area merchants. Likewise, the positive fiscal impacts of the project (See Section 3.17 below) will enable the Village to further invest in programs which will both protect and enhance the Village's resources.

**Goal 3:**

The Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project provides three points of ingress/egress from the site. Residential traveling to areas north and east of the site will likely use the northern access to Hummel Road, leading to points north.

**Goal 4:**

The Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project does not directly impact this goal. However, the positive fiscal impacts of the project (See Section 3.17 below) will enable the Village to further invest in programs which will both protect and enhance the Village's resources.

**Goal 5:**

The Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project has been designed with this principal in mind. The natural environment of the site has been carefully cataloged by the Applicant, by Hudsonia, and by the Village's Design Consultant, Mr. Al Wegener. This has resulted in a plan which, to a great degree, has protected the natural environment. Chief among these steps was to protect the area identified as potential land for the Mill Brook Greenway, protect the wetlands delineated on the site, and an inventory of significant trees undertaken to identify and protect significant individual trees. Further, as discussed within this EIS, the plan preserves the existing trails on site, and provides linkage from the internal sidewalks to the existing trail heads. These trails, as they may be improved and extended by the Mill Brook Greenway, can provide linkages to the adjacent Woodland Pond plan, and the Village core. The specific plans for trail extension, linkage and connection points will be determined by a Mill Brook Greenway management plan.

The site plan presented within this document is significantly less dense than the underlying zoning, providing evidence that the site's "carrying capacity" has been addressed within the design. It is the opinion of the Project Sponsor that the clustering of the proposed housing into the western portion of the site has provided a layout which fosters a sense of community. Each of the age-restricted housing units has been developed around a "center green". This central lawn area, together with the sidewalks, seating areas, and inviting landscaping, is intended to encourage the social interaction and a sense of community among the residents. These details are further supported by the proposed trail linkages, community garden area, and community center, each of

which provides for further interaction not only among the over-55 population, but to encourage interaction with the residents of the “family” townhouses.

One of the alternatives selected by the Planning Board for review was a traditional neighborhood development. This is included as alternative 5.8 and is discussed further in Section 5.0 below. The traditional neighborhood development, while it may have had the advantage of fostering a greater sense of community, would take a greater toll on the natural environment for this site, resulting in a more significant loss of significant trees, as illustrated in Table 76.

**Goal 6:**

The Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project protects approximately 37 acres of visually attractive land for the active and passive enjoyment of residents. As a whole, the site is surrounded by a treed buffer. This buffer has been maintained at least 50 feet wide (up to 500 feet wide in some areas) to protect views into the site. All site lighting will be designed so as to provide a zero foot candle increase along all property boundaries. In addition, individual lighting fixtures will be selected that are residential in character and that do not produce off site glare. In addition, any onsite lighting will be designed so as not to exceed current light pollution levels generated by the neighboring school property. Particular care will also be exercised in minimizing any lighting impacts, beyond the existing condition, on the sensitive wetlands areas. This will ensure that there will be no significant impacts by any onsite lighting on the surrounding neighborhood

**Goal 7:**

The Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz project addresses the growing need for housing for all income types and family arrangements. As proposed, the project has provided housing which is affordable to a majority of Ulster County residents (see Section 1.4). The proposed mix included 204 Age-Restricted (55 years and older) and 96 non-age-restricted, or “family” units so that there is an intermingling of ages within the project.

**Goal 8:**

The water, sewer and on-site roads will remain private and under the control and responsibility of a Home Owners Association (HOA). This would help offset any potential increase in demands on town facilities. However, municipal facilities such as the Village Hall, Highway Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Rescue Squad and Educational Facilities would be provided to residents of the project. New Paltz will be able to provide municipal facilities and services in order to meet the needs and improve opportunities for community activities to the already existing residents and residents of the new development.

**Goal 9:**

Since the project is within the core of the Village, the development will help reinforce and enhance the Village’s commercial, governmental and cultural activities.

***Town of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan***

**Goal 1:**

The proposed development advocates a positive plan towards the preservation of the natural beauty and rural quality of the community. The project will focus development

within the core of the village, thus protecting the periphery from sprawling land use patterns.

**Goal 2:**

The project advocates a protective plan towards the preservation of all environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources. No wetlands regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation exist on the site. Two areas of wetlands under Federal Jurisdiction are in the site totaling approximately 7.43 acres. The project has been sited to avoid the area cited as the Mill Brook Greenway, and to keep structures more than 100' from the large wetland complex in the eastern portion of the property. No negative impacts on natural resources will be caused by the proposed plan. Any work within wetland areas will be completed according to USACOE requirements.

**Goal 3:**

The proposed project incorporates sustainable land use development policies that guarantees balanced and orderly growth. Stoneleigh Woods will provide a broad range of housing options for present and future Village residents including families with children, students and young people, the elderly, and persons who earn less than median income. Land use impacts may include impacts on the value of neighboring properties. The project is designed to use the village's existing infrastructure, such as sewer and water, thus reducing land disturbance.

**Goal 4:**

Stoneleigh Woods will provide a broad range of housing options for present and future Village residents including families with children, students and young people, the elderly, and persons who earn less than median income. The addition of 204 units of "senior" housing and 96 units of age-restricted housing would provide an exceptional opportunity for both populations, while furthering the objectives established in the Comprehensive Master Plan. Additionally, the proposed project supports many of the affordable housing initiatives identified in Priority Strategies to Support Housing Development in Ulster County that was prepared for Ulster County Housing Consortium.

**Goal 5:**

The project area is situated in the Residence District (R-1) and Residence District (R-2) as designated by the Village of New Paltz Zoning Map. Approximately 29.0 (+/-) acres are located in the R-1 District, while approximately 34.3 (+/-) acres are positioned in the R-2 District. The proposed Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz is a Specially Permitted use in both the R-1 and the R-2 Zoning Districts.

Municipal water and sewer service are available and have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed community (according to Village of New Paltz). The Applicant proposes to provide the necessary improvements to connect to the existing water and sewer infrastructure. The water and sewer will remain private and under the control and responsibility of a Home Owners Association (HOA).

**Goal 6:**

A Cultural Resources investigation was undertaken to confirm the presence and significance of any cultural or historical resources on the site. Research and a site walkover has determined that there were no historic structures on the site, no

archaeological finds in the vicinity of the site, and no reported archeological studies of the site. If any cultural resources are found, those resources will be preserved, either in place or through a recordation process for future generations.

**Goal 7:**

Under the proposed project, approximately 37 acres of the Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz site are to be left undisturbed and available for inclusion in the Mill Brook Greenway. Existing trails and the existing setting are to remain for active and passive recreation by area residents. The on-site paths currently link parcels both within the Village and within the Town. In addition, the area proposed for the Mill Brook Greenway establishes a central Greenway for the Village. The project will be linked to the adjacent Erman lands (site of the proposed Woodland Ponds project) and will ensure that the existing open space network is maintained. The project will consist of a community center for all residents of the development, which would help offset demands on other town facilities.

**Goal 8:**

The proposed project will be located within the core of the village. Traffic flow, circulation and parking have been designed such that there is no unreasonable interference with traffic on surrounding streets. Parking areas are of adequate size for the use, properly located, and suitably screened from adjoining residential use, and the entrance and exit drives have been laid out to achieve maximum and adequate safety. The site plan emphasizes pedestrian circulation and provides a safe and reasonable system of drives, service access and parking conveniently accessible to all occupants.

**Goal 9:**

The project site has been designed to minimize stormwater impacts both during and after construction. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP) will be prepared and will be consistent with NYSDEC and the Town Engineer review and requirements. The proposed development is consistent with New Paltz's Comprehensive Master Plan, and doesn't impact New Paltz or the Region's water and wastewater supply.

**Goal 10:**

Regional coordination between the Village and all appropriate agencies will be taken into account, to ensure effective and efficient land-use planning. Planning on a regional level will help ensure greater effectiveness in creating and encouraging the protection of all environmental settings within the Town and Village.

***Ulster County Land Use Planning***

As the Stoneleigh Woods project is located within the Village of New Paltz, the project is particularly consistent with the County's plan. Most significantly, development within the Village of New Paltz is consistent with the expected growth areas. The project is counter to the sprawl option, as the land is in and adjacent to residential neighborhoods and will be connected to central water and sewage treatment facilities.

The project also meets the specific plan goals:

#### Open space and recreation

The project provides significant lands for inclusion in the Mill Brook Greenway, greatly enhancing the local opportunities for passive recreation and open space within the Village and County.

#### Agriculture

While the Stoneleigh Woods site may have once been in agricultural usage as an apple farm, this use was abandoned many years ago. Development of this parcel will take demand away from developing agricultural lands currently in production.

#### Land for development

As mentioned above, this project is consistent with the goals to build where central water and sewer area available; to cluster residential development; to build in existing centers, not new centers; and to develop in New Paltz. The reasons enumerated within the County's Land Use Plan for development within New Paltz remain valid, as the transportation system remains good; retail, industrial, office and service support have all been developed within New Paltz, reducing the need to travel further for services and employment; water supply and sewage treatment are available from the Village; and New Paltz remains the center of population for the southern part of the County.

#### Economic Base

The recreation industry is still a major driver for the County, and this project has little impact, positively or negatively, on this goal.

#### Housing

As the preferred plan will offer housing affordable to most Ulster County residents, the it is the opinion of the Project Sponsor that this project should gain the support of the Ulster County Planning Board, as it has expressed its goals of addressing the housing shortage, (particularly in the Villages), and providing housing access to all.

According to the Ulster County Planning Board<sup>36</sup> between 2000 and 2003, costs for single family residences rose 54.2% to \$184,250. At the same time, the projected median family income rose only 8.1%. The "family" townhouses will also be 2 bedrooms with approx. 1,300 sq ft. The projected sales price of the all units (age-restricted and non-age-restricted) within Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz is in the \$160,000 to

---

<sup>36</sup> *Closing Gaps.....Opening Doors*, Ulster County Planning Board. <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/contpres.pdf>

\$180,000 range. This puts these units within reach of families earning \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year.<sup>37</sup> This represents the largest block of potential homeowners.<sup>38</sup>

The goals of the Ulster County Transportation Plan, while County-wide in nature, have some applicability to the Stoneleigh Woods project. Particularly, the proposal to develop a compact development adjacent to services (the school and medical offices) with 3 vehicular and various non-vehicular access points to the surrounding community supports the goal of focusing development in a way which reduces demand and provides alternatives.

### 3.8.3 Land Use Mitigation Measures

Mitigation included in the design of the proposed project will address any potential impacts on the land use includes the following:

- The proposed development conforms and supports the Town and Village Comprehensive Master Plans, Ulster County's Priority Strategies to Support Housing Development, New Paltz's Transportation and Land Use Study, the Ulster county Land Use Plan and the Ulster County Transportation Plan.

The proposed development has been designed with a road system following existing terrain, will minimize development impacts and preserve desirable terrain features, sensitive ecological features and open space.

- The preferred site plan represents a considerable effort expended by the project sponsor to rework the plans to achieve compatibility with the characteristics of the site and the surrounding land uses and to mitigate the land use impacts.
- Stoneleigh is compatible with existing zoning and with existing and proposed land uses. To ensure conformance with the surrounding neighborhood, landscaping would be utilized in order to protect and enhance the aesthetic quality of the Village.
- The project is proposed in a compact manner, located within an area proposed for more intensive development.
- The connections to central, municipal water and sewer are consistent with the land use plans adopted locally and regionally.
- The multiple vehicular and non-vehicular access points are supported by the transportation goals to provide transportation alternatives.
- The water, sewer and on-site roads will remain private and under the control and responsibility of a Home Owners Association (HOA).

<sup>37</sup> Assumes 20% down payment, 5.625% interest rate for 30 years, 25% of take-home pay allocated to mortgage costs, and a take-home pay equal to 70% of gross income.

<sup>38</sup> *Closing Gaps.... Opening Doors*, Ulster County Planning Board., supra.

- The project will include the development of a Community Center to help offset any potential increase in demands on other town facilities.
- The project Sponsor intends to create a residential community consisting of “senior” housing and non-age-restricted “family” housing. As such, the project will consist of 300 units that will provide a broad range of housing options for present and future Village residents including families with children, students and young people, the elderly, and persons who earn less than median income.
- The preferred plan fosters a strong sense of community through development of central greens, sidewalks and walking trails, seating areas, a community garden area, and a community center.
- Providing Municipal facilities and services that will meet residents’ basic needs while improving opportunities for community activities.
- The project provides a growing residential population while preserving the quality of the existing neighborhoods and their natural environment.
- The project protects and enhances the drawing power of the Village’s commercial and historic areas.
- By providing multiple vehicular and non-vehicular access points to the Village core, the project potentially eases traffic congestion within the Village, which impedes its successful functioning, without spoiling physical and visual amenities.
- The preferred plan, through inclusion of lands within the Mill Brook Greenway, protects the natural environment by linking zoning regulations to site capability, and protects visually attractive land while strengthening scenic views.