



Economic Development

Community Goal:

Encourage economic development, consistent with Lloyd's small town character, to stabilize the tax base.

Objectives:

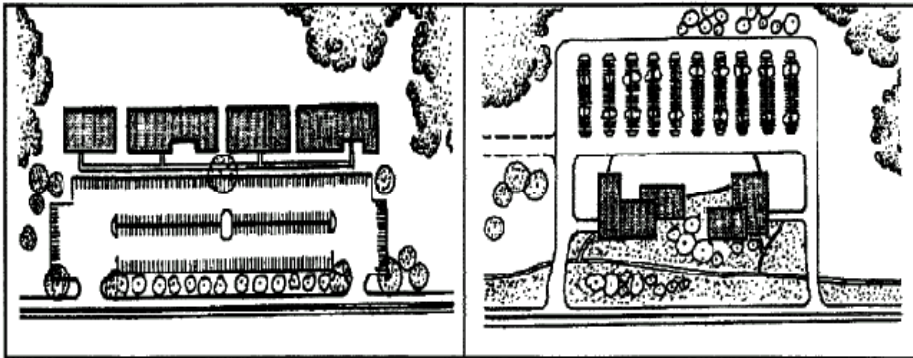
- Encourage the development of small-scale retail and service businesses and light industry in character with the Town's largely rural environment.
- Encourage a wide variety of home occupations to promote economic vitality and diversity in the community.
- Promote agriculture and tourism.

As Lloyd grows, it will be necessary to provide for new commercial development to diversify the tax base and provide services, shopping and employment opportunities. However, commercial development must be carefully planned to ensure that it does not adversely impact Lloyd's rural character. Town residents have often and strongly expressed their desire to preserve the economic vitality of the hamlet and to prevent the proliferation of strip commercial development along the Town's rural highways. Preventing strip development will preserve the green spaces around the hamlet and define the borders of this more densely settled area from the outlying rural portions of the Town. To reconcile the need for expanded business opportunities and the preservation of Highland as the commercial and cultural center of the Town, the *Comprehensive Plan* makes the following recommendations.

8.1 ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVES TO STRIP MALLS

In many public meetings, opinions have been strongly expressed that alternatives to conventional strip-malls should be developed for all commercial zones. Strip-malls are seen as destructive to the rural character of the community and as ruining the scenic beauty of highways. Permitting retail and service businesses on the main highways also detracts from the viability of Highland as the Town's commercial center. Small commercial

centers with innovative architectural designs that fit into the surrounding community and do not disrupt traffic flow should be encouraged, and the Town should consider amending the Zoning regulations to accommodate these factors. Illustrative examples of conventional strip commercial development versus appropriately designed commercial development are shown below:



Strip Commercial Plaza

Parking dominates the site, landscaping is minimal, required open space is at the rear, buildings are monolithic, and no pedestrian amenities exist.

Alternative Plaza Design

While retaining the same building size, offset structures create a reduced sense of mass, parking is at the rear of the buildings, landscaping dominates the site, open space enhances site design, and pedestrian amenities are provided.

Figure 29: Strip Commercial Plaza and Alternative Plaza Design

Like the illustration above, new commercial centers in the commercial zones along Route 9W and Route 299 can be designed to have minimal impact on the adjacent roads, both in terms of traffic circulation and aesthetic quality, while maintaining overall project density. New commercial development should be set back from the existing road network, except in the hamlet, where buildings should be placed near the streets to further conceal the parking and to link the site to the existing streetfront and sidewalk systems. Streetscape improvements should be addressed to ensure community character is preserved and protected. Site design should be pedestrian friendly by incorporating internal walkways or sidewalks, as well as benches and public spaces, shade, covered walkways, arcades, awnings, human-scale lighting, and other amenities that provide a sense of public interest and public space. The

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Town should also amend the Zoning to include a maximum impervious surface coverage requirement for development in the commercial districts to minimize stormwater runoff and other environmental impacts.

All parking areas should be at the rear (ideal location) and sides (less desirable) of buildings to reduce the appearance of a “sea of asphalt” from the road, and developers of large projects should be allowed to postpone full construction of the parking lot until demand is evident. A performance bond can ensure proper compliance. Moreover, current planning and engineering standards support reducing the minimum parking space formulas, requiring less paved area. The Town’s Zoning should be revised accordingly. Access would be provided, ideally, by frontage on secondary roads that would limit the number of curb cuts onto the highways and provide a visual buffer.

Generous landscaping and tree planting requirements, both inside and at the periphery of the site, should be strengthened, particularly between the development and the highway and to buffer adjacent residential areas. Existing vegetation should be preserved to the greatest extent possible to screen new developments and maintain the rural character of the roadway. Architecture should fit the community. Illustrated architectural design guidelines based on Town standards, patterns and preferences should be developed, as discussed in Section 3.8. To prevent the degradation of roadside aesthetic quality, the current signage regulations should be strengthened.

8.2 ATTRACT LIGHT INDUSTRY

Light industries are generally not objectionable because they do not generate excessive noise, truck traffic, fumes, or other nuisances. Light industry should have a minimal negative impact on neighbors or on the natural environment. Some examples of light industries include research facilities, professional offices, small manufacturing, and high tech firms.

Light industry needs an effective transportation system and access to water and sewer infrastructure. A study is currently underway to determine the feasibility of extending the Highland water main north on Route 9W from Riverside Drive to the Town’s boundary. This water main would be accessible both from Route 9W and from the adjacent North Road, where small-scale light industrial facilities currently exist. Extending the water main would help to attract light industrial development along these corridors where traffic impacts would not unduly disrupt residential neighborhoods. The Town could apply for a Community Development Block Grant to finance these infrastructure improvements.

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In addition, special use permit provisions should be adopted to protect natural resources from potential impacts of light industrial facilities. The negative aesthetic and traffic impacts of light industrial structures can be reduced by design requirements related to architecture, parking, and access. Most zoning regulations control just the size and location of the building. However, building form should be subject to architectural guidelines or standards, such as those published by the New York Planning Federation or the Hudson River Valley Greenway. A minimal frontage requirement of up to 300 feet with significant landscaping and/or berming should be provided to reduce the visual impacts from the road. Approaches should also be made appealing to those arriving by means other than the automobile. Paved parking areas should be placed as far from public view as possible, preferably to the rear of the building.

Additional limitations should restrict curb cut width and spacing, reduce the number of entrances onto major roads, as well as eliminate the possibility of continuous paved access. Large screened buffer areas should be required between light industrial and adjacent residential uses. By providing architectural guidelines, regulating the location of parking lots, and requiring proper screening, the visual impact of light industrial uses can be minimized. However, the Zoning should be written to preclude commercial strip development from locating along the portion of Route 9W where water mains are proposed to be extended. Extending the commercial strip is contrary to the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan* to protect Lloyd's rural character and retain the hamlet of Highland as the Town's commercial center.

Once the necessary infrastructure improvements and revisions to the Zoning have been made, the Town should actively market the affected properties to attract viable light industries.

8.3 GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Lloyd has been proactive in encouraging new commercial development in the Town. In 2002, the Town hosted an Economic Development Conference to acquaint potential developers with available commercial site in the Town. Lloyd also has its own Community Development Corporation, which oversees the Town's \$300,000 Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The purpose of the RLF, which will lend up to 50 percent of a project's cost to loans of \$10,000 to \$75,000, is to make financing available to help locate and retain jobs in the Town.

To facilitate the review process for new commercial development, and to encourage small-scale commercial and light industrial development consistent

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with Lloyd's rural character, the Town should adopt a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) that establishes thresholds and conditions to mitigate environmental impacts of new development. When an applicant for site plan or special use permit approval submits a proposal, the potential impacts of the action would be compared to the thresholds and conditions in the GEIS. Proposals that do not exceed the established thresholds would have a streamlined environmental review. If the proposed project exceeds an identified threshold, then a Supplemental EIS may be required. In either case, an expedited review would occur, saving the applicant and reviewing agency considerable time and effort. The GEIS would create an incentive for the type of development the Town wishes to encourage, and would discourage development that is inconsistent with the goals of the community.

The GEIS should include the recommendations to protect visual character explained in detail in Chapter 10. In addition, the following thresholds should be included:

1. A size limit should be established for the square footage of new commercial development to discourage "big box" retail establishments. Projects less than 50,000 square feet of gross floor area would receive an expedited environmental review.
2. Geothermal energy should be used, where site conditions permit, for heating and air conditioning.

All applicants should be acquainted with the benefits of a streamlined environmental review process if they do not exceed the thresholds of the GEIS. And all development proposals should be reviewed for consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan*, with changes recommended where necessary to improve the project's compatibility with the Town's goals.

8.4 LAND USE MEDIATION

To facilitate economic development and avoid costly and time-consuming litigation, the Town's Zoning should be amended to include a section on land use mediation. Disputes between developers, homeowners, and other interested parties frequently arise in connection with decisions made by the Town. Voluntary mediation can provide an alternative to litigation for resolving such disputes.

Mediation should be made available in any dispute in which two or more interested parties agree to it, and should be conducted in accordance with accepted practices. Mediation would supplement, not replace, applicable

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planning and zoning practices, including public hearings. The Town could consent to suspend the time limits required by law to permit the opportunity for mediation.

8.5 ENCOURAGE HOME OCCUPATIONS

With the advent of telecommuting, more and more people are working out of their homes. Others operate small service and retail businesses, or produce small items in their place of residence. Nationwide, home occupations have risen, reflecting fundamental changes in the American economy. In 1997, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 4.1 million self-employed individuals were working at home, and that this figure is rising annually.

Home occupations can provide numerous benefits for both home-based workers and the Town. Home-based businesses provide useful services and encourage business growth by eliminating the initial need for some small businesses to rent commercial space, an important factor to someone who is just starting a new venture. Working at home also saves commuting and childcare costs and reduces traffic congestion. Home occupations can also provide many people who might be unable to work outside the home (including single parents, the elderly and the disabled) an opportunity to earn a living. And by creating activity in residential neighborhoods that might otherwise be deserted during the day, home occupations help to reduce crime.

Most people agree that home occupations are a good thing as long as they do not disturb the residential character of the neighborhood. By clearly defining home occupations and establishing performance standards for them, this industry can flourish while preserving the residential quality of the neighborhood. Since the impact of home occupations is more important than use, performance standards should be developed to provide clear guidance to both zoning officials and those interested in conducting a home-based business. A performance standard approach will protect the rights of home-based workers without creating nuisances in residential neighborhoods. Appropriate standards would include such factors as noise, odors, traffic, and parking.

The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that a variety of home occupations be encouraged in Lloyd to promote economic vitality and diversity in the community. A performance standard approach should be adopted rather than regulating specific uses. In recent years, the Town has seen an increase in the number of requests for variances for home occupations, indicating that the Town's current Zoning is not meeting the needs of this growing industry. The current zoning should be amended to a two-tier structure that distinguishes between home occupations that require a special permit and those that do not. Home occupations that are located in the occupant's home, do not depend on

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daily high volume customer traffic, employ fewer than three people, and do not have other negative effects on residential neighbors would be a permitted use subject to a use permit issued by the Town Building Inspector. All other home occupations, including those located in an accessory building on the property, would require a special permit and would be subject to review and performance standards during the permit process. If the home occupation outgrows the owner's residence and needs to expand by adding employees and/or additional space, the performance standards would ensure that the use no longer qualifies as a home occupation.

8.6 PROMOTE AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM

Agricultural farm outlets that are allowed to sell a variety of local farm produce and related items should be encouraged in Lloyd. Landscaping and signage requirements, curb cut limitations, and setbacks should be used to limit the visual impacts on the road. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that farming be included in any future economic development plans prepared for the Town and that farmers markets and pick-your-own operations be promoted. Protecting and enhancing Lloyd's agricultural industry is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

To help preserve historic or unique farm structures that merit special attention, utilization of these buildings for special commercial operations, such as a bed-and-breakfast, should be encouraged, using a performance based approach. Special consideration should be given to preserving preexisting farm structures such as barns.

Lloyd is well situated near major regional tourism attractions, such as Mohonk Preserve, Minnewaska State Park, the Catskill Mountains, the Appalachian Trail, West Point, the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Sites, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, and the Kingston Roundout, which has boat rentals and access to the Hudson River. The Town should capitalize on its location near these recreational and tourism destinations by encouraging inns, bed-and-breakfasts, and other facilities serving tourists. Numerous studies have demonstrated that visitors who spend the night in a community contribute proportionately more to the local economy than those who just pass through. Proprietors of inns and bed-and-breakfasts are often ambassadors for their local communities and offer information to guests on local restaurants and shops. The current Zoning regulations should be revised to encourage these businesses, with a more streamlined review process. Once these businesses are established, the Town should work with Ulster County Tourism to promote itself as a "destination to stay," with lodgings for visitors to these regional sites.

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The Town can establish itself as a tourism destination by permitting and promoting accessory farm businesses, promoting the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, and by developing the Ridge Trail. As discussed in Chapter 11, trails can promote economic development by attracting visitors who shop and support businesses that serve recreation needs. Since the Hudson Valley Rail Trail runs through the center of Highland, businesses in the hamlet could potentially benefit from promoting the trail to tourists. The Town should also support the effort to open the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge as a pedestrian promenade, or “Walkway Over the Hudson.” The Railroad Bridge, which is a landmark of American civil engineering and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a highly unique resource with significant tourism potential. Lloyd should capitalize on its proximity to this structure.