



# Town of Copake

## 2011

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Proud Past, Promising Future

FINAL PLAN - July 6, 2011

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For over three years, dozens of individuals worked cooperatively to prepare Copake's Comprehensive Plan. Together with the Town residents, farmers and business owners, the following people's leadership, commitment, energy and enthusiasm made this plan possible.

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The Town of Copake

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## I. INTRODUCTION

New York State law grants municipalities the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined in the state legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document that presents goals, objectives, guidelines and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the community. Also known as a master plan or land use plan, a comprehensive plan provides guidance to municipal leaders and helps to ensure that the needs of the community are met. The Town of Copenny has been developing its Comprehensive Plan over the past three years.

## II. PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) coordinates the planning process. The role of the CPC is to guide and lead the planning process; collect and share relevant information; review documents; supervise the consultant; educate residents about the process and the

plan roles and responsibilities, charge and scope; and conduct community outreach and publicity. The committee is being assisted by River Street Planning & Development.



The committee conducted over a dozen focus groups, and coordinated the planning, logistics and outreach associated with survey distribution, community visioning meetings and public workshops. They sent periodic updates by email, wrote and reviewed materials and documents and maintained the flow of communication with elected officials. A community profile documenting existing conditions in the Town has been prepared. A written and online community survey was conducted which had

a 32% response rate of year round and seasonal residents. Quotes from the survey are included throughout the Plan. A public visioning workshop, conducted in November 2009, attracted a standing-room-only audience of over 140 participants. In July of 2010, an action planning workshop involved approximately fifty residents and stakeholders. In June 2011, a presentation of the draft plan attracted over 100 residents.



### III. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Copake has developed a community profile that evaluates its existing conditions, opportunities and constraints. The profile is available as part of the Comprehensive Plan Appendices which can be found on the Town's website at <http://copake.org> and at Town Hall. Key issues and findings are summarized below.

#### A. REGIONAL SETTING

Located in Columbia County, Copake is part of New York's Hudson Valley region located approximately 100 miles north of New York City and 125 miles west of Boston, Massachusetts. Its 2010 population of 3,615 residents, live at an average of 550 feet above sea level in 2,382 housing units on 42.1 square miles. Copake is bounded by the Towns of Hillsdale to the north, Ancram to the south and Taghkanic to the west. The eastern boundary line is the Town of Mount Washington, in Berkshire County, Massachusetts and the Taconic State Park.

"While we live much further apart in distance than those hundreds of families who may fill a city block, our neighborhood ties are closer.

We know each other; we are neighbors, friends, and relatives - our lives touch, and they are often intertwined. "

#### B. HISTORY OF COPAKE

Our early inhabitants were Mohican Indians. The name Copake derives from the Algonquin word for "snake pond." The Town was established on March 26, 1824, when the Town of Granger divided, creating Copake in the eastern half and Taghkanic in the west. In the 1840's, extensive beds of iron ore were discovered at what is now Copake Falls (then known as the Copake Iron Works), which remained the site of iron mining throughout the latter part of the 19th century. The New York and Harlem Railroad was completed in 1852, which improved shipping facilities from earlier methods, including carts and horses.

Until the 20th Century, the majority of residents were farmers. When prices for hay and grain fell in the 19th Century, our farmers turned to sheep raising and then to dairy farming. Commodities such as milk, butter and cheese were consumed locally and shipped by railroad to New York City and other urban centers. Taconic State Park was established in the 1920's by a commission that included Francis R. Masters of High Valley Farm in Copake Falls and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In

recent years, our seasonal homeowner population has increased significantly, adding diversity to our community.

## C. POPULATION

Only limited 2010 United States Census data are available at the current time, including population count, housing unit count and racial composition. In most instances, the community profile relies on 2000 Census data and 2009 Census projections.

Comparative Population Change 1990 - 2010						
	1990	2000	2010	1990-2000	2000-2010	1990-2010
Ancram	1,510	1,513	1,573	0.20%	3.97%	4.17%
Claverack	6,414	6,401	6,021	-0.20%	-5.94%	-6.12%
Copake	3,118	3,278	3,615	5.10%	10.28%	15.94%
Gallatin	1,658	1,499	1,668	-9.60%	11.27%	0.60%
Hillsdale	1,793	1,744	1,927	-2.70%	10.49%	7.47%
Taghkanic	1,111	1,118	1,310	0.60%	17.17%	17.90%

Our population stands at 3,615, an increase of 337 people or 10.28% between 2000 and 2011. Copake's population increased by nearly 16% between the years 1990 and 2010. It grew at a pace that surpasses all surrounding Towns, with the exception of the Town of Taghkanic. Our rate of growth doubled from 5.1% in 2000 to 10.28% in 2011. Our population remained predominantly Caucasian (98%).

## D. HOUSING

The number of housing units increased by 197 units (or 9.1%) from 2,185 in the year 2000 to 2,382 in 2010. Of the total units in 2010, 1,416 are occupied, an increase of 136 units (or 10.6%) over 2000. The number of vacant units also increased by 61 units (or 6.7%) from 905 units in 2000 to 966 units in 2010.

In 2000, property owners lived in 75% of occupied residential units, the vast majority in single-family structures. Multi-family buildings (2 units or more) comprised just over 5% of Copake's housing stock. Mobile homes accounted for 4.7%. Approximately 40% of renter households and 24% of owner households were cost burdened; paying in excess of 30% of their income for housing costs in 2000. The Town's vacancy rates in 2000 were high, with rental vacancy over 10% and for-sale housing vacancy at 5%. The median value of owner-occupied units in Copake in 2009 was \$172,624, an increase of 17.9% since 2000.

## E. INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

In 2000, our median household and per capita income were higher than those in Columbia County, but lower than the New York State median. In 2009, the estimated median household income was \$55,078 and the per capita income was \$30,226. Sixty-two families and 284 individuals lived below the poverty line in 2000.

Educational attainment improved for Town residents between 1990 and 2000, with 81.5% of residents age 25 and older possessing a high school diploma or higher, and 21% possessing a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2000, almost 60% of residents over age 16 were employed. The most common occupations were management, professional and related occupations (28%); sales and office occupations (25%); and service occupations (24%). Copake trailed the County and State in the percentage of residents employed in the manufacturing, information and professional, scientific, management, administration and waste-management services industries. The largest employers include the Taconic Central School, Camphill Village, the Rescue Squad, Town government and High Voltage, Inc. Slightly more than half of all working residents were employed within Columbia County, and traveled just over 30 minutes to work.

**"Copake must realize that to keep young people and families the focus needs to be on attracting jobs and businesses. It's critical to keep school and property taxes low and to encourage business investment and growth."**

## F. LAND USE AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Copake is a rural community comprised mostly of scattered residential uses and farms on country roads. Commercial uses are generally located in the hamlets, particularly the hamlets of Copake and Copake Falls. Other hamlets in West Copake and Craryville are predominantly residential although Taconic Hills School

and a post office are located in Craryville. Many of our lakes are surrounded by residential communities of part time and year round residences. Copake Lake is located off of Route 7. Snyder Pond and Upper Rhoda Pond in West Copake are surrounded by residential areas and farms. Robinson Pond is in Taconic Shores, a private community located on the north end of the hamlet of Copake.

The Town contains 41 square miles of land area (26,240 acres). Copake maintains assessment data on approximately 3,000 parcels that contain about 25,429 acres, indicating that approximately 811 acres (3%) is dedicated to roads and right of ways. Approximately 20% of the assessed land area is tax exempt. Land uses include:

- Residential uses including single and multi-family homes occupy 27.5% of land area
- Agricultural uses occupy 28.5% of the land area
- Vacant land makes up an additional 25% of the land area
- Wild forested and conservation lands make up 14% of the land area
- All other categories combined, including commercial and industrial development, occupy the balance with no category occupying more than 3.0% of the land

**“Everyone we’ve known over the past 60 years, new comer or old-timer, feels strongly that Copake and the surrounding areas are wonderful and very special.”**

Historic sites and other areas of importance are scattered throughout the Town, including the following that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Church of St. John in the Wilderness is located in Copake Falls near the entrance to the Taconic State Park
- Copake Iron Works is located in Copake Falls
- Grange Hall is located on Empire Road in the hamlet of Copake
- Copake United Methodist Church and Cemetery are located in the downtown Copake hamlet.



## G. REAL ESTATE TAX BASE ANALYSIS

The Town has a total taxable assessment base of \$425.5 million. Over 80% of this taxable assessment is generated from residential properties and nearly 10% from vacant land. Commercial properties provide only 3.5% of tax revenues to the Town. An imbalance exists between the percentage of land in residential use and the taxable value that this land contributes. Residences use only 27.5% of the land area, but contribute \$0.80 of every dollar raised through property taxes. Commercial and industrial uses contribute less than \$0.04 of each dollar raised in taxes. For every dollar generated by a residential use, \$0.54 cents comes from a property owner whose mailing address for assessment purposes is outside of the Copake area (seasonal home owners), with the remaining \$0.46 on the dollar coming from a locally owned residential property.

## H. NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

The Town is primarily an agricultural and residential community with a large percentage of acreage remaining open space used mainly for agricultural and recreational purposes. Topography is highly variable with elevations ranging from 510 feet to slightly more than 2,050 feet above sea level at the Massachusetts state line atop the Taconic Mountains, the highest point in Columbia County.



The Town contains numerous areas that are classified as state and/or federal wetlands, primarily located in the southeast quadrant on either side of the Bish Bash Brook, east and west of Route 22 extending into the Town of Ancram. Areas of the Town that lie within the 100-year flood plain are found along the Roeliff Jansen Kill, Bash Bish Brook, the Noster Kill, the Taghkanic Creek and the banks of Robinson Pond.

The Town's many hills, knolls and mountains provide a number of scenic resources including Taconic State Park and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. Copake has several ponds, lake and streams including Copake Lake, Robinson Pond, Upper Rhoda Pond, Chrysler Pond, Snyder Pond, Roeliff Jansen Kill, Bash Bish Brook, Taghkanic Creek, the Noster Kill and Preechey Hollow Brook. The Town has more surface water than any other town in Columbia County not bordering the Hudson River.

The Town of Copake Conservation Resources Committee, Environmental Committee, the Columbia County Environmental Management Council, and the Columbia Land Conservancy assist the Town in the evaluation and protection of critical environmental resources.

**"If roads are widened, straightened and improved, there will be more traffic, people will go faster, rural quality will be diminished and accidents will increase. Keep roads unpaved."**

## I. TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Copake has 87.9 miles of roadway, including 11.9 miles owned by the New York State Department of Transportation and 19.5 miles owned by Columbia County. Approximately 56 miles of road are maintained by the Town Highway Department. There are four key thoroughfares in the community: State Route 22, State Route 23, State Route 344 and County Route 7 and 7A. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail currently provides 4 miles of paved trail that is open to the public. Public transportation is not currently available.

There are several small public water systems in Town and all rely upon groundwater wells for their source. There are two privately owned waste water treatment systems at Copake Lake. Camphill Village also has a waste water treatment facility. Outside of the community water systems, property owners receive their drinking water from individual wells. The Town does not currently have sewer service. All residents and businesses use septic systems for waste disposal. A Groundwater Resources Protection Plan was completed in 2009 by the New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA) in cooperation with the Town's

Environmental Committee. This study inventories and maps the groundwater resources and aquifers, discusses sources of drinking water, evaluates the susceptibility of groundwater resources to growth and development, and outlines potential protection planning strategies.

## J. PARKS, RECREATION, SERVICES AND GOVERNMENT

Copake is governed by a Town Supervisor and a four-member Town Board. Recreation resources include Copake Memorial Park, Taconic State Park, Bash Bish Falls, Rheinstrom Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, Harlem Valley Rail Trail and the Roeliff Jansen Community Park. The Town's Park Commission organizes a variety of community events at Copake Memorial Park.

Residents are served by Taconic Hills Central School District. The majority of Taconic Hills High School students graduate on time. Law enforcement service is provided by the Town Police Department, the Columbia County Sheriff's Department, the New York State Police, and the Taconic State Park Police while fire protection service is provided by the Copake Volunteer Fire Company. Emergency rescue service is provided by the Clausson-Raught Community Rescue Squad.

**"Many of the local community ideas can be housed or consolidated in the Roeliff Jansen School property, including activities for young people and seniors, recreation facilities and arts and cultural education and programs."**

## IV. COPAKE COMMUNITY SURVEY

### A. COMMUNITY SURVEY

During the fall of 2009 a community survey was conducted to assess the opinions of residents and identify the issues they feel the Town should address. A paper survey was mailed to every household and property owner. The survey was also available on the internet. Over 680 surveys were completed, for a response rate of approximately 32%. A full analysis of the Survey results is available as part of the plan appendices. The profile of survey participants is as follows:

- Over 70% are over age fifty
- The majority are full time employed, while nearly one-third are retired and approximately 15% are self-employed or employed full-time

- Almost 95% own their home in Copake
- Over 40% of have lived in and/or owned property for over 20 years
- Just over half (54.2%) use their property as a principal residence, while the rest use it for a weekend or vacation home
- Over half have no children, or children no longer at home, with just over 20% coming from families with children
- Nearly 70% think they will still be living in Town in five years

Participants live and/or own property in Copake because of the scenic beauty, rural atmosphere, small-town feel, recreation opportunities, safety, the quiet and peacefulness of the community, the friendliness of the people and the lakes. The majority of residents support these values, without regard to age, income or residence status.

Top Reasons People Love Copake						
	< 40 years	> 60 years	Year Round	Second Home	Earn < \$50,000	Earn > \$100,000
Scenic Beauty	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rural Nature	X	X	X	X	X	X
Small Town	X	X	X	X	X	X
Safety	X	X	X	X	X	X
Family Friendly	X	X	X	X		X
Friends Here		X			X	X
Family Here	X		X		X	

Participants identify the lack of amenities, rundown character of the downtown, high taxes, distance from amenities and auto dependency, lack of employment and poor cell phone service/ broadband as the things they like least about living in Copake. People identify taxes, controlling growth, maintaining rural character, increasing employment opportunities, maintaining local businesses and improving the downtown as the key issues facing the Town over the next decade.



## B. PRIORITIES FOR COPAKE

### 1. TOWN CENTER

There is strong agreement that the Town should improve “Downtown Copake” (the area around the Clock), encourage new business, enforce codes, improve building appearance, enhance beautification efforts and encourage more retail shops.

### 2. HAMLETS

Respondents feel that the Town should improve hamlets by beautification, seek funds for preservation of historic buildings and housing rehabilitation, and implement local design standards in the hamlets.

### 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Participants agree that we should retain existing businesses, recruit new businesses, and encourage “green” environmentally friendly business. They support a “buy local” campaign, efforts to expand local jobs and provide job training, and tax incentives for local businesses. Respondents identified a grocery/general store, restaurant, theatre, small retail stores, bakery, coffee shop and a liquor store as uses they would support in downtown Copake or the hamlets.

**“I think that the revitalization of Copake's downtown is an urgent need. I would not object to development in the field “behind” Town Hall. It is a natural place for the town center to grow.”**

### 4. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Efforts to refine the local historic district program, protect historic structures and places, and provide incentives for rehabilitation of buildings receive strong support. The Iron Works at Copake Falls, the railroad buildings, the Roeliff Jansen School, churches and historic homes were identified as historic resources that should be protected.

## 5. TOWN GOVERNMENT

Respondents agree that we should explore shared services with other towns/municipalities, encourage greater code enforcement, improve the efficiency of local government and make more services available online.

## 6. HOUSING

Participants support actions to encourage single-family homes, and housing that can be afforded by working people, seniors and young families. They favor the reuse of existing properties over new development whenever possible. When new construction is desirable, respondents favor small scale housing clusters over large subdivisions.

**"I am a second homeowner, and in that, I feel in some part responsible for the struggles of the farmers in and around Copake: second home people buying out farm land for what is in essence, a luxury."**

## 7. OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Respondents support efforts to protect ground water quality, water supplies and aquifers, stream corridors, wetlands, scenic views, wildlife habitats, rural character, forested areas, ridgelines, and provide incentives for private land conservation and purchasing open space. Most respondents feel that protecting farmland, open space and the environment are critical actions to preserve rural character.

## 8. AGRICULTURE

Respondents support efforts to preserve our agricultural character and will work to market local farm products, encourage niche or specialty farming and use of farm incentives and tax exemptions, provide agricultural education, support community supported agriculture and improve farmer representation on local boards.

## 9. ARTS AND CULTURE

Actions to improve cultural resources such as historical sites, increase marketing of existing cultural events, encourage performance arts (music,

theater and dance), develop new cultural events, and encourage growth of arts-oriented businesses receive endorsement. Some respondents observe that nearby communities such as Great Barrington, the Berkshires, and Saratoga offer a cultural focus and that Copake's niche might be outdoor recreation, especially bicycling.



## 10. INFRASTRUCTURE

Copake's efforts to improve cellular telephone service, improve high-speed internet service, promote alternate solar and wind power, improve cable/satellite television service and develop interconnected bike and walking lanes receive support. Respondents also agree that the Town should improve the condition of roads and bridges, prevent floods and improve facilities for bicyclists.

## 11. COMMUNITY FACILITIES & RECREATION

Respondents agree that we should encourage reuse of the Roeliff Jansen School, support local fire and emergency services, extend the rail trail, share recreation resources with the school district, improve the Town Park,

encourage more activities for young people and promote new medical services.



## V. COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

### A. COPAKE'S VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement and set of planning goals form the foundation of the Plan. On November 7, 2009 a public visioning workshop was held to develop the vision statement. At the meeting, the committee and the consultant presented an



overview of the planning effort and explained the visioning process. Participants were asked to finish three statements:

- "What do you love about Copake?"
- "What things would you change?"
- "When these things are preserved or changed, what will the Town be like?"

A draft vision statement and set of goals for the Comprehensive Plan have been developed using feedback from the visioning workshop. The purpose of a vision statement is to provide direction for the community's growth and development, serving as a foundation underlying the development of goals and strategies for implementation. The statement reflects the common values of local residents and expresses the "ideal future" that we hope to attain.

## B. COPENACK'S GOALS

Based upon the vision statement as well as the community profile and input from the residents gathered from the survey and at the public workshops, a set of goals has been developed. The goals address key elements including land management, Town government, housing, economic development, open space, recreation, and infrastructure, and community services. The goals guide the action planning process and allow for the development of the initiatives and projects outlined in this action plan. Through its goals, Copake seeks:

- A close and lively community where people care about each other
- Thriving farms
- A healthy natural environment
- A scenic rural landscape
- A thriving economy
- A well maintained infrastructure
- An attractive community with character
- Effective and efficient Town government
- Quality housing for all residents
- Skillful management of our land and resources

"Copake is a quiet little community that, with the exception of terrible cell service, is just fine the way it is. I feel it is very important to preserve the country setting, conserve the land and history of the area. We need to start now. Let's not waste any time."

## A Vision of Copake in 2030: Proud Past, Promising Future

As seen in 2030, Copake is a wonderful place to live and a close home-town community of great rural beauty. Year round and part-time residents treasure the beautiful vistas, woods, meadows, lakes and streams. Our Town offers a quiet, relaxed, clean, safe and attractive place to live and raise a family.

Farming is our heritage and foundation. Copake's farms prosper with fertile land, abundant water and strong regional and urban markets. By fostering environmentally-friendly farming methods, we preserve our healthy environment, natural resources and open space. As careful stewards, we protect our cultural heritage, historic resources and rural traditions for future generations.

Our cultural, social, business and entertainment needs are met by a vibrant and historic downtown that offers a variety of thriving small businesses, shops, and restaurants. These establishments attract patrons from Copake and surrounding towns, as well as a growing number of visitors. Each of Copake's hamlets is a distinct place, but they are all connected to the larger community through a network of roadways and bike paths. Copake's business friendly attitude encourages compatible light industry and welcomes commercial uses that complement our neighborhoods and safeguard our environment. Civic leaders and local entrepreneurs work together to support resilient and prosperous local businesses.

The successful implementation of the comprehensive plan, begun 20 years ago, has created a healthy choice of well-planned housing. Young people just starting out, as well as families and those who have reached retirement, can find comfortable and affordable homes. Community events, cultural venues and recreation facilities offer activities that bring us together and appeal to children, teens and adults. Our roads, bridges, and water systems are safe and well-maintained. We have anticipated the needs of future generations with modern communications. Clean, conservative energy use and the development of green businesses make Copake an environmental leader in the region.

Whether we live in Copake year-round or part-time, we are good neighbors to each other, supportive of those in need and share a deep sense of pride in this place. The open communication between residents, farmers, business people and leaders is a testament to our success. Our government officials care foremost about our citizens; they work cooperatively, transparently and conscientiously for the welfare of the Town in partnership with nearby communities. Copake grows in a logical, responsible manner and provides efficient basic life services, keeps tax burdens under control and bears in mind the rights of our citizens. Our commitment to each other and this community, our commitment to preserve the land, our lively hamlets, and Copake's rural character unites us.

## VI. GOALS & ACTION PLAN

This plan is a visionary document. The Community Profile documents current conditions in Copake. This action plan outlines the range of initiatives to achieve our shared vision. Some actions can be achieved with available funding, while others require new approaches, funding and partnerships. Updating our land development regulations will provide the technical framework to oversee plan implementation. We have organized the plan by goals, catalysts and actions. Goals describe the desired results of the Plan. Actions are specific statements, programs, or regulations that help to implement the goals. A catalyst is an action of significant importance or priority that can inspire other actions.

### A. OUR GOAL IS A CLOSE AND LIVELY COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER.

#### 1. CONTEXT

Throughout this planning process, residents have expressed the desire to be part of a closely knit community. We want to belong in Copake and call it "home." Our Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve our powerful diversity and meet the needs and desires of all residents: young and old, rich and poor, year round and part time, farmers and business people and to strengthen the connection we feel toward each other through shared experiences, excellent communication and a shared vision for the future.

Our residents, our sense of place, spirit and character are a source of pride. We respect and celebrate our rich historical roots in agriculture and industry. For many people, quality of life is a key factor in their decision to stay in Copake or become a new resident. We celebrate our diversity of interests, experiences and backgrounds and believe that increased communication and understanding of different perspectives is essential for the plan's success.

"I'd like to see Copake emerge as an example of how a town can come together and be unique in bringing the right kind of prosperity that makes us all proud of the quality of life this Town could offer."

The actions that follow identify ways for people to connect, contribute and achieve our vision by celebrating community events, restoring downtown, protecting agricultural lands, safeguarding water quality, supporting cultural offerings and providing services and activities for residents, young and old.

## 2. CATALYSTS


- a. Develop a Copake Resources Bank to identify community resources. We will work to understand the available skill base of residents and raise funds from private residents and the private sector to match local government efforts and contributions from Federal, State and community foundations.



## 3. ACTIONS

- a. Work with community groups to enrich the lives of community residents by funding cultural programs, events and venues, by collaborating on grant applications to funding sources such as the NYS Council on the Arts, the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Arts in Education Program. Collaborate with the school district for close integration with school fields and





facilities. Improve and expand services and activities for youth, families and seniors.

- b. Continue to enhance and expand methods for communication with and between residents through the Town web site, and new approaches such as social networking site, e-newsletter, and marketing of local services and events.
- c. Improve methods for communications with residents in emergencies, e.g. through emails and telephone calls to every home and through improved cellular and data transmission services between EMS providers, other public safety officers and local hospitals.
- d. Through the revitalization of the hamlets, create opportunities for community gatherings and communication.

## B. OUR GOAL IS THRIVING FARMS.

### 1. CONTEXT

Many New York State communities are losing farm land to residential development. Within Town, 7,255 acres (or 28.5% of the total land area) are classified as an agricultural land use. According to American Farmland Trust's research, agriculture contributes more per dollar to the tax base than it consumes in services. Residential uses, on the other hand, can consume as much as 30% or more in services than they contribute in revenue. Communities that do not carefully plan for growth may find themselves in trouble as residential development pressure and property values increase, and service demands rise more rapidly than the tax base can absorb. It is necessary for Copake to preserve farmland in order to maintain our fiscal soundness for the long term.

Farming makes a vital contribution to the well-being of our residents. It is in our fiscal interest to promote agriculture and support conservation of working lands. It plays a vital role in preserving the Town by maintaining quality agricultural land, providing jobs, maintaining open spaces, and expanding tourism. Farmers make significant contributions as stewards of the undeveloped land (open-space) that they manage. We protect our soil

and water resources, recharge our groundwater, abate stormwater runoff, preserve wildlife habitat, scenic resources and historic places and vistas that define Copake's character as a result of the farm community's stewardship.

Maintaining active farmland is essential, and the best way to do that is to encourage the profitability of farming. While it's possible to conserve land so that it looks like a farm, creating a way of life and economic environment where a farmer can make a living is a harder challenge. We can do this by encouraging innovation and expansion into activities that increase profitability such as use of alternative energy, establishment of farm stands, niche and mixed farming, and development of programs and facilities that add value to farm products such as a milk processing or cheese production plant. In addition, our Town will benefit from implementing policies that conserve the maximum amount of agricultural land in large blocks for farm use and safeguard the environmental benefits agriculture provides. Techniques to achieve this may include purchase of development rights or, in unique circumstances, acquisition of property.



Agricultural protection requires a delicate balance between preserving prime agricultural lands and the rural lifestyle while allowing for carefully planned residential and commercial development. While there are few easy

solutions, Copake can take actions to help farmers to stay in business and preserve land for agricultural use.

## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. Enact a Community Preservation Fund Law. The New York State Community Preservation Act gives municipalities (typically counties) the power to create a voluntary Community Preservation Fund to create and preserve parks, nature preserves, recreational areas, open spaces, agricultural areas, wetlands and marshes, watershed areas, beaches and shorelines, rivers, forest lands, waterfronts, historic places and wildlife habitat.


In order to participate in the program, the Town would be required to prepare and adopt a preservation plan that identifies areas to protect and appoint an advisory committee to administer the fund. Typically communities generate revenue for the fund by adopting a local law to create a real estate transfer fee (two percent maximum). The fee on real estate transfers must be approved by voters through referendum. The fee only applies to the percent of real estate transfers whose value is over the median sales price of residential property within Columbia County, helping to ensure that housing for working families remains affordable.

**“If people do not want to see or smell agricultural activities they need to move back to the city and stop trying to repress agriculture here.”**

**“Don’t over-reach in expenses. Encourage small farms. We have some of the best land. Use it to grow things.”**

## 3. ACTIONS

- a. Advocate for the grant that has been submitted to NYS Agriculture and Markets to fund an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. As part of this process, survey farmers about things Copake could do to assist them and meet individually with each farmer.
- b. Support community events that expose residents to farming.

- 
- c. Market the Town's agricultural resources and support a buy-local campaign that focuses on local produce, the farmers market, and supporting Hudson Valley Fresh or similar enterprises. Expand the availability of Hudson Valley Fresh products locally. Facilitate partnerships between farmers and the School District to encourage the use of more local produce and dairy products. Encourage "buy local" programs including regional cooperation to encourage markets locally and in nearby urban areas.
  - d. Ensure that new development does not create conflicts with farming or infringe on agricultural operations.
  - e. Evaluate and, as appropriate, allow a wider range of farm-based businesses that enable farmers to diversify their operations, as part of the zoning review.
  - f. Protect soils, especially prime agricultural soils by focusing development in settled areas around the hamlets, downtown and existing clusters of housing or commercial uses whenever possible.
  - g. Consider development of a niche farming center in the Copake hamlet that could be an active farming center, a place where the community can interact with farmers and a permanent location for the farmers market. The land surrounding Town Hall, which the Town does not presently own, contains prime agricultural soils and has been identified for a potential location for such a use.
  - h. Review agricultural exemptions to ensure that they are granted only where acceptable farming practices are occurring.
  - i. Evaluate development of a voluntary Purchase of Agricultural Easements Program (PACE program) for the conservation of agricultural lands and prime agricultural soils.

**"Every decision concerning job creation, business development, and affordable housing initiatives should be measured against preserving agriculture and character first and foremost, before any decision is made. Once lost, they cannot be restored."**

## C. OUR GOAL IS A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

### 1. CONTEXT

We have a duty to environmental stewardship. Long-term stability of our wildlife species, habitats, ecosystems, as well as public health and welfare requires that we protect environmental resources, biodiversity and open space. Pressure from development and our own human activities continually pose threats to our environment. To support livability, maintain property values, and promote economic development and tourism we must maintain healthy natural systems. This work is an investment in the future of our community.

Management of all water resources is also a top priority. Copake has more surface water than any other town in Columbia County not bordering the Hudson River and is dependent on groundwater. Our lakes and ponds contribute to the scenic beauty and attractive recreational uses. There is already substantial development around these bodies of water and a desire for more public access to them. Since the majority of homes and businesses rely on private wells and septic systems, the possibility of groundwater contamination is significant.





The Town will exercise care in controlling future growth that may jeopardize the ecology of these areas. We want to be faithful stewards of our natural ecosystems but recognize that there are competing interests. Our plan protects our natural heritage, sensitive lands, plants and wildlife and water resources.


## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. Prepare a comprehensive environmental resources management plan. This plan will outline strategies to inventory, monitor, regulate land use and educate the public about the Town's environment. The plan will build upon the inventory and recommendations prepared by Conservation Resources Committee and address:
  - i. Water Supply/Source Protection (including evaluation and implementation of the 2009 Groundwater Protection Study recommendations)
  - ii. Steep Slopes
  - iii. Flooding and Stormwater Management
  - iv. Forest Management and Protection
  - v. Wetlands, Stream Corridor and Waterbody Management
  - vi. Habitats and Biodiversity Protection

**"Copake and West Copake were lively agricultural and vacation communities over generations. While times may be different, the natural assets which made that possible remain and are our greatest advantage"**

## 3. ACTIONS

- a. Study alternative water source, and supply options including allowing the use of non-potable water for irrigation, graywater collection and reuse, and alternative sewage treatment techniques.
- b. Protect lakes and bodies of water.
- c. Establish a threshold with measurable standards beyond which an improved septic system will be required.

- 
- d. Ensure that decision making with regard to lakes and ponds is informed by a conscious balance between preservation and the economics of recreation. Copake will emphasize the importance of water not only for its physical health but also for its contribution to our economic health.
  - e. Evaluate and monitor the environmental health of all the bodies of water in Copake, including the following specific recommendations:
    - i. Copake Lake - Copake Lake is an asset to the Town, the largest lake in the County, and is surrounded by numerous businesses.
      - Control further growth that may threaten the well-being of the Lake and its habitat.
      - Explore options to provide for public access to Copake Lake.
    - ii. Lower Rhoda Pond - Lower Rhoda lies within both Copake and Ancram. We will encourage cooperation between the two towns to protect this lake.
    - iii. Upper Rhoda Pond - There is a business district in the area of Upper Rhoda. This business activity is an asset to the Town and will be maintained, but not expanded.
  - f. Continue to manage extractable nonrenewable natural resources including sand, gravel and topsoil through local codes.
  - g. Coordinate actions that affect flood protection, groundwater protection, wetlands, habitat, and stream corridors protection laws with those of other municipalities including the County, State, and nearby towns.

**"The health of the environment including water, air, and soil is the basis of good growth. Visual environment is important too: it gives us a sense of order and makes us "good neighbors".**

- h. Promote compatible land uses over existing aquifer areas to minimize potential sources of contamination, and develop maps of aquifers and recharge zones to establish uses and densities accurately.



## D. OUR GOAL IS A SCENIC RURAL LANDSCAPE

### 1. CONTEXT

This goal embraces the Town's motto: "Land of Rural Charm." What gives Copake "rural character" is a combination of our landscape and our people. Our scenic beauty is defined by its natural landscape. Hills, mountains, forests, lakes and streams make the Town rural. The fields, walls, country roads, historic buildings and ponds created over the years by people give the Town character.

Copake contains some of the most beautiful countryside in Columbia County. Large areas of

"We need a vibrant "culture"...to attract new residents and to retain those growing up in the region. Let's try to make Copake a destination folks would like to come to visit, spend time and money - and fall in love with and to eventually settle here."

wetlands, woodlands, and creek corridors provide habitat for wildlife. Gently rolling hills provide scenic vistas of productive agricultural fields. Without open space, the Town would have few distant views, little visual range, and less contrast, landscape history and land use variety. We cherish these attributes; they make us want to stay here.

Rural character depends upon more than a visual aspect of open fields and an agricultural past; it's also about community and livelihood. We appreciate pastoral landscapes because they provide a place and a scale in which humans make sense. Knowing people and having lives intersect in various ways is typical of the rural lifestyle. Having the downtown and hamlets that provide needed goods and services and gathering spaces where we meet and relax also strengthen our rural community.

We hope to live the rural lifestyle enjoyed over many generations. Other residents want to live in this beautiful rural place while retaining the conveniences of a larger community. Reconciling these expectations is a challenge the comprehensive plan addresses.

**"The ridgelines and large tracts of open farmland are what make Copake unique and beautiful.**


**These things must be preserved and encouraged at all costs. We must protect the quality of what we have."**

## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. Create a Conservation Advisory Committee with broad technical experience to serve in an advisory capacity to the Zoning and Planning Boards, upon request. The Conservation Advisory Committee's will continue to identify and classify scenic and historic resources, as a resource to the Town.

## 3. ACTIONS

- a. Develop practical regulations to protect scenic resources, including open spaces, woods and meadows, lakes, ponds and streams, ridgelines and viewsheds.

- 
- b. Review and approve the inventory of resources prepared by the Conservation Resources Committee. This report is incorporated and can be found in the appendices to this plan.
  - c. Use conservation tools to preserve scenic resources and prime agricultural lands through purchase of development rights and other approaches in partnership with local organizations like the Audubon Society, the American Farmland Trust and Columbia County Land Conservancy.
  - d. Encourage appropriate siting criteria and performance standards to protect habitat, groundwater, aquifers, wetlands, watercourses and critical environmental areas.
  - e. Encourage the use of green energy (wind, solar, geothermal, biomass) and support alternative energy production, if it has acceptable environmental and scenic impacts.

**"We can't compete on culture with the Berkshires. But our vast hiking and biking resources on public land should be promoted more."**

## **E. OUR GOAL IS A THRIVING ECONOMY.**

### **1. CONTEXT**

Copake is striving for a diverse, stable business community that brings economic vitality, while maintaining a balance with population. The Town plans to have a mixed economy that is competitive and prosperous. Maintaining our appealing quality of life is a key objective of the economic development goals and actions. In addition to support for the agricultural economy, we will encourage business expansion, professional services, niche retail and dining in appropriate locations. It is our hope that small technology companies and light industry will create living wage jobs for our skilled workers.

A vibrant and stimulating downtown plays a critical role in our quality of life, but today the downtown and hamlets need a more clearly defined focus, identity and niche. Tourism can be a valuable and growing segment of Copake's unique economy, but it too needs to stand out from surrounding communities.

**"Look at successful "Berkshares" campaign in Great Barrington to encourage "buy local" behavior."**



We are part of a larger regional market that crosses both county and state boundaries. Economic development efforts for Copake will be effectively linked with the economic development interests throughout Columbia County, Western Massachusetts, the Hudson Valley and Capital District. We will fully participate in regional economic development processes. A healthy economy is essential to the continued growth. Without a strong economic base, Copake will not be able to implement the Comprehensive Plan, nor will we have the fiscal strength to provide the kinds of services desired by the existing and future residents. Today, industrial and commercial land uses make up less than 3% of our land area. A healthy economy results in more than new jobs; it means expanded wealth for residents, a welcoming environment for existing and new businesses, and improved fiscal capacity and stability for the Town.

## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. Take all steps necessary to revitalize and rehabilitate “downtown Copake” as a mixed use, walkable, compact, livable and affordable place. Attract businesses which utilize storefronts and small buildings and benefit from foot traffic including a farm stand (and other small stores which sell fresh and local produce, meats and dairy products), a bakery, book store, art galleries, outdoor and recreation store, liquor store, theaters (both movie and live theater) and others. Recognize each hamlet’s unique vision and link them to the town-wide economy through partnerships with organizations such as Around the Clock, Copake Lake Conservation Society and other hamlet committees.
- b. Position Copake as a bicycle tourist destination with lodging, dining, provisions, bicycle parts and services. Explore, over time, development of bicycle racing or mixed sport events like ironman competitions. Work closely with the County and NYS Department of Transportation to

**“The untapped resource in this community is seasonal home owners. Get a bigger share of their hearts by getting them more engaged in the community and everyone will be better off.”**

improve cycling facilities, share the road systems, signage and safety improvements. Develop an action plan to catalog the types and classes of roads in the area.

### 3. ACTIONS

- a. Protect existing small businesses by encouraging a “buy local” campaign, marketing their services and supporting streetscape and building rehabilitation to improve the physical environment.
- b. Attract new service and retail businesses that meet the needs of all homeowners, both full time and seasonal, by partnering with Columbia County’s business attraction initiatives and entrepreneurship training program. Support the expansion of the evening and weekend store hours, as appropriate.



- 
- c. Attract compatible new light industry, particularly green businesses that are compatible with our traditional character by partnering with Columbia County's business attraction initiatives, making available "shovel-ready" locations, flexible space for start-up companies, and infrastructure for business expansion.
  - d. Support tourism by working with the Columbia County Tourism Board. Complete an inventory and create maps of attractions and amenities in the nearby communities and work collaboratively with them to understand the current tourism market and shape our role in the regional tourism network. Encourage development of tourism amenities, including lodging.
  - e. Ensure that the Town is business friendly by updating and enforcing codes, streamlining permitting processes and partnering with the County Economic Development Office and local realtors to market property to potential developers.
  - f. Continue to encourage local business development through home occupations that are compatible with the residential and rural character of the local community, meet established standards and create local employment opportunities.

**"I believe Copake is an ideal retirement place for high quality environmental living where we have enough amenities for a civilized life."**

**"As we age, the need for appropriate housing for and transportation for seniors are becoming a major concerns."**

## F. OUR GOAL IS A WELL MAINTAINED INFRASTRUCTURE.

### 1. CONTEXT

The availability and adequacy of infrastructure is critical to maintaining our quality of life, encouraging density in the hamlet areas and ensuring that new development does not negatively affect farms or water and septic quality for existing property owners. Our population has grown nearly 16% since 1990. As it continues to grow, one of the greatest challenges will be

providing and maintaining public infrastructure and services at a level that meets the needs of the community.

Copake does not currently operate public water or sewer systems, and, for the most part, these facilities are not available in many other rural areas of Columbia County. This plan recognizes that we will rely upon private wells and septic systems for some time into the future. The Town will develop and enforce regulations that ensure installation and maintenance of septic systems meet or exceed all local and state requirements. We will also prepare for new infrastructure in areas most suitable for growth while protecting land and water resources. We will also work to promote our long-term economic security through energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy production in a manner consistent with our rural character.

An excellent telecommunications infrastructure will be critical to establishing Copake as a competitive business location. In addition to high-speed infrastructure for email and entertainment, the community needs to plan for other forms of e-commerce as well as advanced services such as distance learning and telemedicine.

Our transportation system connects people and places. Copake's system will provide multiple modes of transport, including cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, and walking. We understand that the automobile will continue to be the dominant mode of transportation in the foreseeable future. However, encouraging alternative modes can alleviate congestion, reduce air pollution, reduce consumption of natural resources and reduce maintenance costs. The Town will provide for safe and easily accessible off-street trails, providing access to parks, schools, activities, shopping, natural areas, state lands and the hamlets.

## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. Establish a green industry identity for the community. Explore opportunities for wind, solar, biomass or other alternative energy sources. Prepare wind maps as an initial step to guide this process. Position the Town to lead this effort by developing an energy strategy for government facilities and other users that advocates clean energy production (windmills/solar/biomass), green building development, reduction of carbon-footprint and conservative

energy use. Explore funding from the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority to support these efforts.

### 3. ACTIONS

- a. Develop modern telecommunications for residents, businesses and emergency service providers, including cellular and high-speed data, wireless internet, cable and satellite television and entertainment, that are sited in such a way as to have minimal or no impact on scenic resources.
- b. Develop a Comprehensive Road Maintenance Plan that prioritizes road and bridge maintenance and evaluates the repaving cycle.
- c. Adopt a scenic road and rural road standards in order to preserve and maintain the aesthetic quality and natural beauty of our scenery, roadside views and character while reducing the cost of new development. Work with Town Highway Department, NYS Department of Transportation and utility companies to minimize the undesirable effects of road management (paving, widening of shoulders, ditch-cleaning, salting, tree-cutting, development of the transportation network, etc.) and pursue scenic road designation and opportunities to locate utility lines underground as appropriate.
- d. Develop a multi-modal transportation plan that meets the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and future transit users/senior transport users. As part of that effort, work closely with the Columbia County and NYS Departments of Transportation to require careful scoping and an effective public process for upcoming major road projects.
- e. Create linkages, trail and paths between hamlets, and to parks and school facilities with funding from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Coordinate efforts of the

**“Town building codes should discourage 'McMansions' and other building types that would not be aesthetically cohesive with our historic Town.**

**Laws and codes should be fairly enforced for everyone.”**





Harlem Valley Rails Trail Association to expand that trail and create linkages with the hamlets, parks, the library and the school.

- f. Although the Town currently relies on private wells and septic systems, and will continue to do so for some time in the future, the Town will anticipate the eventual need for public sewer and water systems. The Town will explore the feasibility of such systems, particularly in the hamlet areas, and plan accordingly.

G. OUR GOAL IS AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY WITH CHARACTER.

1. CONTEXT

Community character includes the natural, visual and cultural characteristics of the Town. Copake’s historic character and heritage include structures dating back to the nineteenth century. Our rural landscape includes working farms, fields, barns, fences, and farm houses. Historic preservation of structures and other features also have economic and cultural benefits that provide a basis for tourism activities. Our appearance expresses a great deal about our community and the people who reside here. If our Town is well planned and attractive it will attract shoppers, visitors, businesses, and residents.

“Local towns must work together to minimize budget expenditures and supply a better quality of life for residents.

New sources of revenue such as wind and solar should be explored.”

Our land use decisions preserve our unique character and distinguish us from other places in Columbia County and the Hudson Valley region. We will enhance our natural surroundings and establish visual relationships between uses, establishing Copake as a pleasant environment with its own identity. If our population continues to grow, community design will be of considerable importance. Tools such as gateway requirements, lighting, signage and streetscape standards, and cluster development will help to integrate the built and natural environments in a manner that protects water quality, open space and habitats.

The arts are thriving in communities across America. Arts and culture attract and retain residents. Businesses identify these assets as a key



element in their decision to locate or remain in Copake. We want to preserve existing historical and cultural assets, and encourage new amenities such as theater and performance venues, entertainment facilities, museums, and cultural activities that convey our history and character and enrich our lives.

## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. The Town will encourage restoration of historic resources. A number of homes in Copake Falls have already installed plaques that interpret their history. We will consider development of a historic preservation village offering a valuable interpretation opportunity for existing historic structures and sites, and a possible tourism destination. Copake may consider bringing other historic buildings to the preservation village.
- b. Develop an arts and performance center to highlight the stage companies and classical music organizations in the area, and support the many successful artists, playwrights and others who live in and around the Town. Both adaptive reuse and new development should be considered.


**"All of our historic resources should be protected, since once they disappear, they are gone forever. We should be responsible stewards of our history and our environment."**

**There has to be a careful conscientious balance between preservation and economic development."**

As sites are identified, a market study and concept design will be completed. Donated services have been offered for these tasks. Other related actions might include building murals, use of empty stores as gallery space or creation of an event like Millerton's "Fall for Art."

## 3. ACTIONS

- a. Develop common sense design standards for commercial development that reference Copake's unique community architecture as part of the planned review of the Town Zoning Ordinance and codes.

- 
- b. Use landscaping, signage, public art or other decorative features to define and improve the entrances or gateways to the community.
  - c. Make streetscape improvements like lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, pathways, gathering spaces, banners in downtown and hamlets whenever possible. Develop the streetscape as part of multi-modal transportation plan listed above.
  - d. Support maintenance and development of a diverse array of recreation resources on Town-owned land, parkland and other conserved lands through grants from New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and other sources.
  - e. Preserve historic resources including buildings, places, views, and stone walls which represent distinctive elements of our historic, architectural and cultural heritage for the economic, cultural, educational benefit of the community. Encourage nomination of local historic landmarks for listing on a local, state and national register of historic places in order to access available funding and protect sites from adverse impacts.
  - f. Assertively and consistently enforce codes and continuously evaluate code enforcement staffing levels.
  - g. Explore adoption of a demolition review process and guidelines, with special emphasis on protection of historic structures and resources.

## H. OUR GOAL IS AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT TOWN GOVERNMENT.

### 1. CONTEXT

The mission of our government can be characterized by two words: stewardship and vision. Stewardship refers to the responsibility of our leaders, together with residents, to care for that which is entrusted to us and build partnerships with others to preserve, protect and conserve those assets. Vision refers to the responsibility of our government to look long-range and make sure that plans and codes work efficiently. In this plan, our government makes a decision to be a collaborative, transparent and

professional organization that uses its powers to strengthen our community. It commits us to prudent management of a diversified tax base, fair property valuation and efficient delivery of community services. The cost-efficient delivery of vital community services is the core government function. Copake will be a community whose tax base supports high quality municipal services including excellent customer service at all levels of government.



Maintenance of a reasonable tax rate is a priority for local residents. We will carefully monitor and stabilize the level of property taxation and increase the percentage of revenue derived from sources other than property taxes. Today, we face the financial demands of a growing population making long range planning essential. Copake will govern openly with the fullest possible public participation. We will further open dialogue with residents and seek out the maximum amount of involvement in community decisions, including by the weekend and seasonal property owners. We will monitor and track the implementation and effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan (at least every five years). We will also continually review codes and ordinances to ensure that they are consistent with the comprehensive plan.



We will assess the desirability and feasibility of sharing services to reduce the growing costs of delivering needed services to citizens, while addressing resident concerns about the potential loss of autonomy in considering these opportunities. Shared services with nearby towns and Villages, the County and the School District are possible. The NYS Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant will fund this investigation. This program enables communities to evaluate service and government consolidations, mergers, dissolutions, cooperative agreements and shared services. Some communities use this process to develop plans to share equipment or personnel, coordinate fire and EMS services, or create buying pools for various goods and services.

Ultimately, we may benefit from the consolidation of Copake, Ancram and Hillsdale. Each community could maintain its identity as a hamlet, but each hamlet would be part of one township. This would streamline government and increase its efficiency, since there would be just one supervisor, one Board, one court, and so forth. It is apparent that the County is exploring opportunities for consolidation. Copake will anticipate this and appoint a committee which would serve as a liaison in this process.



## 1. CATALYSTS

- a. Consider hiring a Town administrator, a professional who would provide consistent management over changing administrations. This person would have fiscal responsibilities including producing and overseeing the budget and running the business of the Town. The Manager would be responsible for proposing strategies to enhance the economic development and would write applications for grants and draft plan proposals. The position would require a background in public and municipal administration. He or she would answer to the Town Board and would be responsible for carrying out the policies set by the Board.
- b. Explore opportunities for consolidation. There is already cooperation between the Towns of Ancram, Copake and Hillsdale. There is a tradition of cooperation between the fire departments and with the highway departments of the three communities. There is also cooperation regarding emergency services and park services. We encourage this cooperation. We will consider consolidation in other areas such as courts, grant writing, GIS development and management, code enforcement, environment committees, communication linkages and the assessor's office. We will apply for a grant to study shared services and perhaps municipal consolidation from the New York State Department of State or any other appropriate entity.

**"As part of the comprehensive planning process, thought needs to be given to maintenance of core services such as fire, emergency and public safety services over the next ten to fifteen year window."**

## 2. ACTIONS


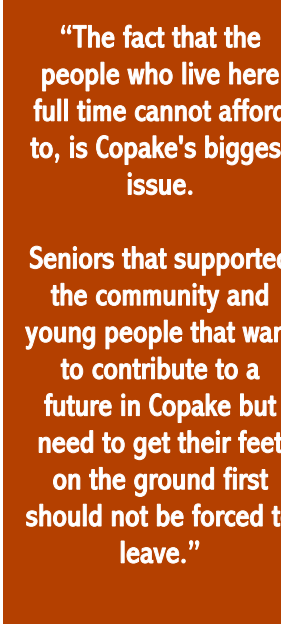
- a. Weigh both economic and public safety factors to determine whether maintenance of an independent Town police force is necessary, and if consolidation of public safety services is a sensible alternative.
- b. Keep Copake a safe community by addressing declining volunteer emergency service levels, costs, advanced telecommunications requirements, and trends toward privatization of emergency

services, perhaps through the development of incentives, a special assessment district or other approaches.

- c. Review the Zoning Ordinance and related land use regulations. The Town will appoint a committee to guide the process to update the codes to conform with the Comprehensive Plan as soon as possible.
- d. Review the Code regulations (not related to the land use regulations) and the Policy and Procedure Manual with a view towards eliminating inconsistencies, outdated practices and conflicts.
- e. Appoint a committee to review the process for granting exemptions and make recommendations to the Town Board for any changes in process or exemptions granted.
- f. Consider development of local incentives, perhaps through adoption of performance standards or use of development bonuses to encourage commercial building rehabilitation and downtown revitalization. Focus on:
  - i. Protection of resources such as historic properties, bodies of water, open space, recreational areas, viewsheds, waterways, wetlands and wildlife habitat.
  - ii. Promotion of green energy and green building design
  - iii. Support for stable and prosperous farming
  - iv. Development of housing that is affordable to local residents
- g. Use improved communication and an improved web site to make all codes, ordinances, plans, budgets, reports, audits, maps and other materials on-line in an accessible format that allows for public review and comment. Use social networking sites to educate residents about the unique aspects of our environment, scenic resources, farming, and historic preservation through partnerships with local groups, advocacy organizations and or local schools.

**“Do a little bit here, and a little bit there. Don't concentrate on one thing. Make Copake beautiful and safe.”**

**“Planning and zoning boards are to be helpful to guide projects, not tie them up for months and years.”**

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- h. Make efforts to “green” Town operations and reduce environmental impacts including use of alternate energy and the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Program Certification.
- i. Evaluate all Town-owned properties and reuse or dispose of those that are not providing a community service. In the future, we will exercise caution in accepting properties with encumbrances.
- j. Promote open dialogue with residents and seek out the maximum amount of involvement in public decisions, including weekend and seasonal property owners.
- k. Carefully monitor and stabilize the level of property taxation.
- l. Assertively pursue grant funding and public-private partnerships to support municipal services and diversify our revenue stream.
- m. Monitor and track progress, including a periodic review of the implementation and effectiveness of Plan (at least every five years).
- n. Provide adequate financial, personnel, and technical support to implement these goals and actions.
- o. Enact, and diligently enforce, clear, precise and understandable codes and ordinances to address our goals and actions.
- “The fact that the people who live here full time cannot afford to, is Copake's biggest issue.**
- Seniors that supported the community and young people that want to contribute to a future in Copake but need to get their feet on the ground first should not be forced to leave.”**

## I. OUR GOAL IS QUALITY HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

### 1. CONTEXT

Copake strives to offer quality housing for residents of all ages, incomes and stages of life, but market considerations make assuring these opportunities a challenge. According to the 2000 Census, approximately

24% of homeowners and 40% of renters are cost burdened, paying in excess of 30% of their monthly income for housing costs.

It's common in communities with a large seasonal homeowner population for land prices to be high and vacancy rates to be low. Seniors with limited income and young families earning entry-level wages struggle to afford housing. Rising energy costs worsen the situation. Without public water or sewer, communities like Copake require larger and more costly building lots to protect public health and the environment.

Housing costs may make it difficult for families to live in Town, become new community members or retire "in place." Our approach strives to offer life cycle housing where young couples can rent an apartment or buy a starter home, grow into a home large enough for a family, and, as empty nesters, transition into townhomes or other retirement options. While some affordable or workforce housing is available to buy or rehabilitate, the growing cost of maintenance and utilities and the asking prices of newly constructed housing are out of reach of many residents. The jobs/housing balance is also essential. There must be a growing and diverse employment base if families are to be able to afford a home locally.

"The town population is getting older and older. We need to have reasons that a middle age person would live here. That might be business, but it could also be schools, sustainable, organic, green, social network, arts and culture."

## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. Appoint an ad-hoc committee to develop a life cycle housing plan that considers housing location, choice and affordability. The plan will use current 2010 Census data as it becomes available, and regional housing market data to identify needs and outline policies, programs and partnerships to help Copake remain a diverse residential community.

## 3. ACTONS

- a. Continue to encourage "least-cost housing" including small scale, affordable housing through reuse of upper stories of hamlet buildings, conversion of large single-family homes, allowing in-law apartments, residential use of accessory structures and senior

cottages. Accessory uses should be subordinate to the principal use, available only to relatives, and consistent with standards and requirements of the underlying zone. The Town will review existing accessory building and senior housing provisions and update them as necessary.

- b. Consider development of a tax exemption for first-time homebuyers earning less than 80% of the area's median income.

## J. OUR GOAL IS SKILLFUL MANAGEMENT OF OUR LAND AND RESOURCES.

### 1. CONTEXT

Copake has a long tradition of protecting its rural land. Traditional development patterns help to preserve relationships and interactions between neighbors and define the rural and landscape character of Town. Our individual land use decisions will drive the need for infrastructure, public services, and our ability to conserve natural resources and environment. We will guide these decisions and insure that they balance the needs of individual property owners with the needs of our community as a whole.

**"Copake needs more local restaurants and cafes, more healthy food stores that support local farms, more boutiques and specialty stores. We do not need mainstream chains and large retail outlets."**

We will balance land uses to achieve the goals of controlled growth, support for working farms and conservation of open space. In permitting areas for different land uses during the land development code update, we will consider impacts on natural areas, the existing rural development pattern and future public improvements. Our land use actions will support a Town that is cohesive, well-organized and efficient. We will encourage and manage growth while respecting Copake's unique character and addressing the needs of existing residents and businesses.

The Town is about to commence an update of its land development codes to ensure that the zoning ordinance and other tools encourages the



preferred land use pattern. The new zoning will translate the goals of the plan into actions that expand the tax base, preserve open space, and conserve agricultural lands and environmental resources. Key issues addressed in the zoning will include updating definitions to include all contemporary uses, exploring zoning tools (like clustering, conservation standards, protection of environmental resources, density incentives, performance and incentive techniques), and identifying land suitable for commercial and industrial growth. Revised subdivision standards and new design standards will be considered to improve the visual impact of new development.



We will rely on strong leadership, an educated community, and consistent code enforcement. The balance we strive for is based on a land management framework that addresses design, zoning, incentives, conservation and agricultural initiatives. The best codes are ineffective without consistent enforcement. All residents want to protect their investments and property values. Here in Copake, the single-family home is the tax base, contributing \$0.80 cents on every tax dollar collected. Applying laws consistently and providing community education are fundamental ways to stabilize taxes until growth in other sectors can

contribute more resources. Although it may lead to a higher number of citations, Copake's enforcement efforts will be proactive as well as responsive to complaints.

## 2. CATALYSTS

- a. Develop a plan for the Hamlet of Copake which would incorporate the current Hamlet, the Town Park, the Town Hall and surrounding lands. Consider mixed uses that meet community desires for an arts center, senior housing, value-added agricultural operations or others that require more land and parking than is readily available in the downtown core. Though Copake does not currently own the land surrounding Town Hall, it is an important property because of its central location. It should receive careful consideration in the planned update of the land use codes.

## 3. ACTIONS


- a. Encourage commercial growth in a well-planned and carefully thought-out manner. Development will be in already settled areas and away from environmentally sensitive areas so that we can conserve open space and maintain rural character. For example, we will encourage commercial growth as follows:
  - i. Craryville Route 23 from Two Towns Road east towards the Hillsdale border.
  - ii. Route 22 from the north entrance of Copake to the north end of Old Route 22 and from Yonderview Road north to the Hillsdale line.
- b. In order to encourage growth in these areas the Town may consider reviewing zoning district designations and expanding the business districts in both areas. The uses which might be considered for these areas are businesses which require highway access, such as recreational businesses (e.g. skating rink and tennis courts),

**"We all need and want to live in Copake, work in Copake, raise families in Copake but without programs in place to stimulate growth and attract more light industry and local sustainable businesses we cannot guarantee this to the people."**

research laboratories, light manufacturing, small hotels, inns and other establishments in the hospitality and tourism industry.

- c. Provide sidewalks, benches, bike racks, appropriate lighting and adequate parking.
- d. Provide incentives to encourage business growth.
- e. Review lot sizes to assure that requirements do not discourage development.
- f. Modernize infrastructure, including sewer, water and utilities as soon as it is feasible, focusing on the lakes, downtown and hamlets first, and in conjunction with the County's reconstruction of Routes 7 and 7A.
- g. Allow downtown expansion as well as infill development when appropriate.
- h. Encourage existing commercial business activity in the area of the Catamount Ski Area (and expansion if viable). Consider amending zoning to reflect the current use and anticipate possible new access road and construction of the Catamount Resort Hotel.
- i. Explore the historical value of the Industrial Zone (I-1 zone on the border of Copake, adjacent to Anthony Street) and evaluate if it is desirable to rezone this area to reflect its current use.
- j. Encourage light industry and manufacturing which do not negatively impact the environment. Consider zoning changes to allow for such uses in business districts (e.g. on Route 22 and Route 23, as suggested above.) Buffered commercial parks will also be evaluated.
- k. Review the effectiveness of the floating industrial district.
- l. The Hamlets and the areas of Town (Copake, Copake Falls, West Copake, Craryville, and Copake Lake) have each developed their own identity.


**"We want biking, walking, escorted hiking trails with wildlife professionals, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, grand theater groups, museums, local library concerts, music opportunities, and healthful activities for all."**

- 
- i. Copake Lake – In order to protect the environment, we will limit further development at the current density around Copake Lake. In order to achieve this, the Town will consider reducing the size of the R-2 zone.
  - ii. Copake Falls – Continue to encourage the historic pattern of development in this area.
  - m. The further development of the Rail Trail which runs through Copake Falls will also be encouraged. We will support the extension of the trail, including links to the Hamlet of Copake, the Roeliff Jansen Community Library and the Roeliff Jansen Community Park.
  - n. Copake North is the area which includes the site of the Roeliff Jansen Community Library and the Roeliff Jansen Park, as well as various businesses and is identified as a significant area.
  - o. Explore provision of tax incentives which would encourage expansion of the historic aspects of the downtown and hamlets.
  - p. Encourage low-impact development (LID), where appropriate, as a sustainable land development approach.
  - q. Develop and maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS) and evaluate the feasibility of sharing GIS systems and management with nearby Towns.

**“I love Copake and the surrounding countryside. Let's avoid the trap of encouraging economic development of whatever type, by whatever means. Conserve and enhance the qualities that make lifelong residents love the place and newcomers make it their home (and or home-away-from-home).”**

## VI. FUTURE LAND USES

Copake imagines a future land use pattern largely unchanged from today. Our population grew by 10% between the year 2000 and 2010. We recognize that continued population growth will result in competition for rural land and higher service demands (and costs)



that must be met by a stable and diverse tax base derived from a productive land use pattern. In the survey, residents identify taxes, controlling growth, maintaining rural character, increasing employment opportunities, maintaining local businesses and improving the downtown as the key issues facing the Town over the next decade.

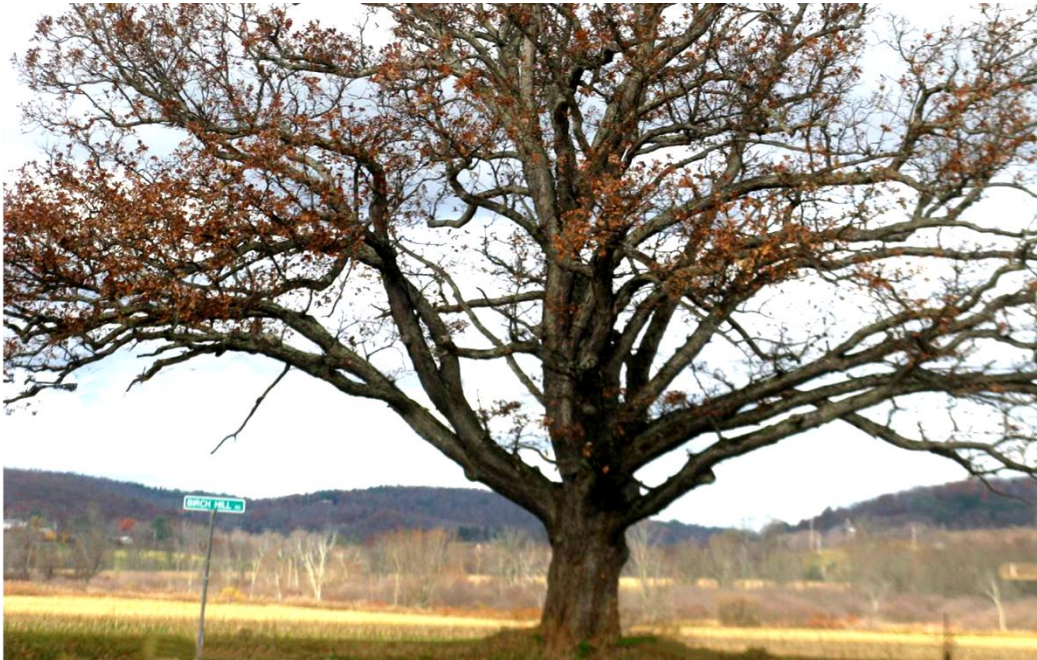
Copake will continue to be a residential community of year round and seasonal homeowners. We will encourage clustered residential development and accommodate modest commercial growth in areas that are already settled such as our main corridors and existing hamlets. Nearly every property in Town is dependent upon private water and sewer systems. Development standards or even limitations on development around our lakefront communities, especially Copake Lake, may be needed to protect water quality. As infrastructure is modernized we will evaluate our zoning to ensure that it is both business-friendly and protective of our resources. We do not see these as mutually exclusive goals.

The Town has established priorities that help to retain its rural and historic character, protect its natural features and historic resources. We will maintain our active agricultural base through land use policies that protect farmlands, prime agricultural soils and open spaces. We will continue to plan and direct development away from these resources or limit impact on them.

Our leaders will look for opportunities to distribute tax burden through carefully controlled growth of commercial and industrial development in designated areas. Two areas have been identified as potential locations for expanded commercial activities. The first is in Craryville along Route 23 from Two Towns Road east towards the Hillsdale border. The second is along Route 22 from the North entrance of Copake to the north end of Old Route 22 and from Yonderview Road north to the Hillsdale line. These issues will be carefully evaluated in the upcoming Land Development Code update.

For the short term, we will focus on revitalizing existing commercial hamlets through infill and rehabilitation. Expansion of the downtown to connect public uses such as Town Hall and the Park are likely, but will also require development of public water and sewer infrastructure. This expanded area, adjacent to the downtown Copake hamlet, could accommodate a larger mix of uses, such as a movie theater, that have received support from the public. As part of our expanded emphasis on tourism, we will also encourage development related to the Catamount Ski area.





## VII. ADOPTION AND MONITORING

The plan will be used to make decisions and set priorities, including those established by the annual budget. As required under New York State law, any new land use regulations or amendments must be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, an important role of the Town Planning Board will be to review the plan and make sure that its goals and actions are integrated into land use and development decisions.

State law also stipulates that capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the plan take its goals and actions into consideration. The involvement of local residents will also be vital in helping Copake to achieve the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. To keep implementation on schedule, the Planning Board will complete a periodic review every five years, or more frequently, if appropriate. A status report will be presented at a Town Board Meeting.

### Photos thanks to:

Page 3: Dale Peterson, the Farmers Market  
Page 31: Hugh Davis, the Newly Restored Clock  
Page 39: Denise Chickery, Copake Lake  
Page 45: Copakecottage.com, Bash Bish Falls  
All Other Photos: Patricia Placona

A small town is where:

- Your grown up cousin or even your mother drives the school bus.
- A local official knows everyone by name; and even if he doesn't, he can refer you to his mother who will.
- You can stand in the middle of the street talking to a friend all day and not get run over.
- Everywhere you go about your daily business - the gas station, the store, the post office or the bank-everyone knows your name.
- When you read someone's name in the local paper, you actually know who they are, and so does the editor.

The city is a great place to visit, as they say, but isn't it fun to live in a small town?

Elinor Mettler, *Down Maple Lane*

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN APPENDICIES**

(See binder at Town Hall and documents at <http://copake.org>)

1. Town Survey
  - a. Cover Letter
  - b. Survey Form
  - c. Primary Results
  - d. Open-ended Answers
2. United States Census of Population
  - a. 2000, complete
  - b. 2010, as available
  - c. 2009 Claritas Data Service Census Estimates and Projections
3. Farmland Profile
4. Community Profile and Maps
5. Groundwater Study 2009
6. Summaries of Stakeholders Meetings
  - a. Agriculture
  - b. Arts and Culture
  - c. Building Trades
  - d. Business Community
  - e. Community Services Organizations
  - f. Conservation and Historical Resources
  - g. EMS and Copake Fire Department
  - h. Government
  - i. Home Based Businesses
  - j. Hospitality-Tourism
  - k. Police
  - l. Realtors
  - m. Youth
7. CEAB: Vision for Economic Development
8. Conservation Resources Committee Inventory
9. Summary of Copake Exemptions
10. Report on Town Owned Property
11. Comparison of Aspects of Ancram, Copake and Hillsdale

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
<b>GOAL A: OUR GOAL IS A CLOSE AND LIVELY COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER</b>						
<b>CATALYST</b>						
A.	Develop a Copake Resources Bank to draw on residents skills and talents and to raise funds from private residents and the private sector to match public sector investment and jumpstart important community initiatives.	*		Short	Town, residents, community organizations, local community foundations	No Cost
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Work with community groups to enrich the lives of community residents by funding cultural programs, events and venues.			Ongoing	Town of Copake, regional arts and cultural organizations, local artists	Town of Copake, Community Foundations, NYS Council on The Arts
B.	Collaborate with the school district for close integration with school fields and facilities.			Ongoing	Town of Copake, Park Commission, Youth Recreation Programs, School District	No Cost
C.	Create a downtown arts "destination" as an anchor for revitalization.	*		Long	Residents, local and regional arts organizations, organized group of local artists, advocates for the arts	NYS Council for the Arts, NYS Economic Development Programs, local foundations and philanthropists
<b>* = Action is a priority</b>						
<b>Z = Action will be addressed as part of zoning update</b>						

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
D.	Improve and expand services and activities for youth, families and seniors.			Ongoing	Community based and faith-based organizations, the library, etc...	Town of Copake, Columbia County, surrounding Towns, NYS OPRHP
<b>GOAL B: OUR GOAL IS THRIVING FARMS</b>						
<b>CATALYST</b>						
A.	Consider enacting a Community Preservation Fund Law to preserve farmland, natural, community and historic resources.			Long	Town of Copake, Columbia County, American Farmland Trust, Local Farmers	NYS Ag ad Markets, NYS Department of State, Columbia County
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Develop an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.	*		Short	Town of Copake, local farmers, County Planning Department, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets	\$25,000 grant request has been filed with NYS Agriculture and Markets
B.	Support community events that expose residents to farming.			Ongoing	Community residents, the Farmers Market, Town of Copake	No Cost
C.	Market the Town's agricultural resources and support a buy-local campaign that focuses on local produce, the farmers market, and supporting Hudson Valley Fresh or similar enterprises.			Short	Town of Copake, local farmers, Columbia County Planning, Columbia County Tourism	No Cost



## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
D.	Protect agriculture from conflicts with new development and direct growth away from prime agricultural soils.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
E.	Consider allowing a wider range of farm-based businesses to diversify farm revenue.		Z	Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
F.	Protect soils, especially prime agricultural soils by focusing development in settled areas		Z	Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
G.	Consider development of a niche farming center in the Copake Hamlet. that could be both an active farming center, and a place where the community can interact with farmers and provide a permanent location for the farmers market.			Medium/Long	Town of Copake, local farmers and local farm businesses	Panning Grant from local foundation, NYS Greenway, NYS Office of Homes and Community Renewal
H.	Ensure that agricultural exemptions are granted only where acceptable farming practices are occurring.			Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
I.	Evaluate development of a voluntary Purchase of Agricultural Easements Program (PACE program).			Medium	Local farmers, Town of Copake, Columbia Land Conservancy, Columbia County Planning	New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
<b>GOAL C: OUR GOAL IS A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
<b>CATALYST</b>						
A.	Prepare a comprehensive environmental resources management plan addressing water supply and source protection, slopes, flooding, forestlands, wetlands and streams, and habitats and biodiversity.	*	Z	Short	Town of Copake, Conservation Resources Committee	Town of Copake, NYS DEC Planning Grants

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A/B.	Protect lakes and bodies of water and study alternative water source and supply options.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake, Conservation Resources Committee, lake associations	Town of Copake, NYS Agriculture and Markets, NYS DEC
C.	Establish a threshold beyond which improved septic systems will be required.	*	Z	Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
D.	Strike a conscious balance between water quality preservation and the economics of recreation.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
E.	Evaluate and monitor the environmental health of all the bodies of water in Copake.			Ongoing	Town of Copake, Conservation Resources Committee, local lake associations	No Cost/NYS DEC
F.	Continue to manage extractable nonrenewable natural resources like aggregate and topsoil.			Ongoing	Town, farmers and foresters	No Cost
G.	Coordinate Town actions that affect flood protection, groundwater protection, wetlands, habitat, and stream corridors protection laws with those of other nearby municipalities.			Ongoing	Town and surrounding municipalities	No Cost
H.	Promote compatible land uses over aquifer areas to minimize potential sources of contamination.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
<b>GOAL D: OUR GOAL IS A SCENIC RURAL LANDSCAPE</b>						
<b>CATALYST</b>						
A.	Create a Conservation Advisory Committee with broad technical experience to serve in an advisory capacity to the Zoning and Planning Boards, upon request.	*	Z	Short	Town of Copake. Local environmental professionals, Conservation Resources Committee	No Cost

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Develop practical regulations to protect scenic resources, including open spaces, woods and meadows, lakes, ponds and streams, ridgelines and viewsheds.			Ongoing	Town of Copake, local environmental professionals, Conservation Resources Committee	No Cost
B.	Review and adopt the resource inventory prepared by the Conservation Resources Committee.	*	Z	Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
C.	Work with local conservation organizations to preserve scenic resources and prime agricultural lands.			Ongoing	Columbia Land Trust, Audubon Society, NYS OPRHP	No Cost
D.	Encourage appropriate siting criteria and performance standards to protect natural resources.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
E.	Encourage the use and production of green energy (wind, solar, geothermal, biomass) if it has acceptable environmental and scenic impacts.			Short	Town of Copake, Columbia County, NYS ERDA	No Cost
<b>E. OUR GOAL IS A THRIVING ECONOMY</b>						
<b>CATALYSTS</b>						
A.	Take all steps necessary to revitalize and rehabilitate "downtown Copake" as a mixed use, walkable, compact, livable and affordable place. Recognize each hamlet's unique vision and link them to the Town-wide economy.			Short/Ongoing	Town of Copake, Around the Clock Committee, Economic Advisory Board	NYS Division of Homes and Community Renewal

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
B.	Position Copake as a bicycle tourist destination with lodging, dining, provisions, bicycle parts and services.	*		Short	Town of Copake, regional cycling groups, bicycle racing organizations, Columbia County, business and lodging providers	No Cost/To Be Determined
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Protect existing small businesses.	*		Ongoing	Business owners, realtors, Economic Advisory Board, Columbia County Department of Economic Development	No cost
B.	Attract new service and retail businesses that meet the needs of all residents, both full time and seasonal.			Short/Ongoing	Business owners, realtors, Economic Advisory Board, Columbia County Department of Economic Development	No cost
C.	Attract compatible new light industry, particularly green businesses that are compatible with traditional character.		Z	Medium	Town of Copake, Columbia County Department of Economic Development	No cost/ Columbia County Economic Development
D.	Support tourism by working with the Columbia County Tourism Board.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No cost/ County Tourism Department
E.	Ensure that the Town is business friendly by updating and enforcing codes and streamlining permitting.	*	Z	Short	Town of Copake	Town of Copake
F.	Continue to encourage local business development through home occupations.		Z	Short/Ongoing	Town of Copake, Economic Advisory Board	No Cost

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
<b>GOAL F: OUR GOAL IS A WELL MAINTAINED INFRASTRUCTURE</b>						
<b>CATALYSTS</b>						
A.	Establish a green industry identity for the Town. Explore opportunities for wind, solar, biomass or other alternative energy sources. Prepare wind maps as an initial step to guide this process.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	To Be Determined
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Develop modern telecommunications for residents, businesses and emergency service providers.			Short/Ongoing	Town of Copake	Telecommunications providers
B.	Develop a Comprehensive Road Maintenance Plan that prioritizes road and bridge maintenance and shortens the repaving cycle.			Medium	Town of Copake, Columbia County, NYS DOT	Town of Copake
C.	Adopt scenic road and rural road standards.		Z	Medium	Town of Copake, NYS DOT, Utility Companies, County Highway Department	No Cost
D.	Develop a multi-modal transportation plan that meets the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and future transit and senior transport users.			Long	Columbia County, NYSDOT, Town of Copake	Columbia County, Scenic Hudson
E.	Create linkages, trails and paths between hamlets, and to parks and school facilities. Coordinate with efforts of the Harlem Valley Rails Trail Association to expand linkages throughout the Town.			Medium	Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, Town of Copake, NYS OPRHP, residents, and property owners	Harlem Valley Rail Trail, residents, NYS OPRHP, Town of Copake
F.	Anticipate the eventual need for public sewer and water systems and plan accordingly.			Medium	Town of Copake	Town of Copake



## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
<b>GOAL G: OUR GOAL IS AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY WITH CHARACTER</b>						
<b>CATALYSTS</b>						
A.	Consider development of a historic preservation village offering a valuable interpretation opportunity and a possible tourism destination.			Medium	Town of Copake, Historical Society	No Cost
B.	Develop an arts and performance center to highlight the stage companies, classical music organizations, and the many successful artists, playwrights and others who live in and around the Town.			Medium/Long	Residents, local and regional organizations, organized group of local artists, advocates for the arts	NYS Council for the Arts, NYS Economic Dev. Programs, local foundations
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Develop common sense design standards for commercial development.		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
B.	Establish Standards to improve gateways		Z	Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
C.	Make streetscape improvements like lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, pathways, gathering spaces, banners in downtown and hamlets whenever possible.			Short/Ongoing	Town, NYS DOT, Columbia County, businesses, hamlet groups	Town of Copake, NYS DOT, Columbia County
D.	Support maintenance and development of a diverse array of recreation resources.			Ongoing	Park Commission, Harlem Valley Rail Trail, NYSOPRHP	NYS OPRH, Rail Trail, Town of Copake
E.	Preserve historic resources including buildings, places, views, and stone walls.		Z	Ongoing	Town, residents, Historical Society	Town of Copake, NYS OPRHP
F.	Assertively and consistently enforce Town codes.		Z	Short/Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
G.	Evaluate adoption of demolition review regulations		Z	Short/Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
<b>GOAL H: OUR GOAL IS AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT TOWN GOVERNMENT</b>						
<b>CATALYSTS</b>						
A.	Consider hiring a Town administrator – a professional who would be appointed across administrations.			Medium	Town of Copake	To Be Determined
B.	Explore opportunities for consolidation with nearby municipalities.	*		Short	Town, nearby communities, Columbia County, School District	NYS Department of State Shared Services Grant
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Weigh both economic and public safety factors to determine whether maintenance of an independent town police force is necessary and if consolidation of public safety services is a sensible alternative.			Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
B.	Keep Copake a safe community by addressing challenges facing emergency service organizations.			Short	Town of Copake, local emergency service providers	Town, EMS Providers, Local Foundations
C.	Appoint a committee as soon as possible to review all land management and zoning regulations to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.	*	Z	Short	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	Cost of Consultant Services
D.	Appoint a committee to review and update the Town Code (other than land management).		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
E.	Appoint a committee to review the tax assessment process.			Short	Town of Copake	No Cost

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
F.	Consider development of incentives to encourage commercial building rehabilitation and downtown revitalization.			Medium	Town of Copake	To Be Determined
G.	Use improved communication and an improved web site to make all codes, plans, and budgets, etc... online. Use social networking sites to educate residents about the unique aspects of Copake.			Medium	Town of Copake	No Cost
H.	Make efforts to "green" Town operations and reduce environmental impacts.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	To Be Determined
I.	Evaluate all Town-owned properties and reuse or dispose of those that are not providing a community service.			Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
J.	Promote open dialogue with year round and seasonal residents and seek out the maximum amount of involvement in public decisions.			Short/ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
K.	Carefully monitor and stabilize the level of property taxation.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
L.	Assertively pursue grant funding and public-private partnerships.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	Town budget for grantwriter
M.	Monitor and track implementation of this Plan.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
N.	Provide adequate financial, personnel, and technical support to implement these goals and actions.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	Town budget
O.	Enact, and diligently enforce, clear precise and understandable codes.		Z	Short/Ongoing	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Committee	Town budget, for code enforcement

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
<b>GOAL I: OUR GOAL IS QUALITY HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS</b>						
<b>CATALYST</b>						
A.	Appoint a committee to develop a lifecycle housing plan addressing housing choice and affordability.	*		Short	Town of Copake	No Cost
<b>ACTONS</b>						
A.	Continue to encourage "least-cost housing" including small scale, affordable housing through reuse of upper stories of downtown buildings, conversion of large single family homes, allowing in-law apartments, residential use of accessory structures and senior cottages.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
B.	Consider development of a tax exemption for first-time homebuyers earning less than 80% of the area's median income.			Short	Town of Copake	To Be Determined
<b>GOAL J: OUR GOAL IS SKILLFUL MANAGEMENT OF OUR LAND AND RESOURCES</b>						
<b>CATALYST</b>						
A.	Develop a plan for the Hamlet of Copake which would incorporate the current Hamlet, the Town Park, the Town Hall and surrounding lands.	*		Short	Town of Copake, local realtors, business owners, Around the Clock, Economic Advisory Board,	Town of Copake. Volunteers, NYS DHCR Main Street Program, NYSDOT, Economic Advisory Board
<b>ACTIONS</b>						
A.	Encourage commercial growth in a well-planned and carefully thought out manner in already settled areas and along parts of Routes 22 and 23.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
B.	Review zoning district designations and consider expanding the business districts where appropriate.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
C.	Improve streetscapes: provide sidewalks, benches, bike racks, appropriate lighting and adequate parking.			Medium	Town of Copake, downtown and hamlet associations	Town of Copake, Businesses, NYS DHCR Main Street Program, NYSDOT, Economic Advisory Board
D.	Provide incentives to encourage business growth.			Ongoing	Town of Copake, Columbia County	To Be Determined
E.	Review lot sizes to assure that lot size does not discourage development.		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
F.	Modernize infrastructure, including sewer, water and utilities as soon as it is feasible.			Medium/Long	Town of Copake	Town of Copake, Private Developers, NYSDOT, NYS Main Street Programs
G.	Allow downtown expansion as well as infill development when appropriate.		Z	Ongoing	Town of Copake, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
H.	Encourage existing commercial business activity in the area of the Catamount Ski Area.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
I.	Explore the historical value of the Town's Industrial Zone.		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Historical Society	No Cost

## Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

#	Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
J.	Encourage light industry, manufacturing and business parks which do not negatively impact the environment.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
K.	Review the effectiveness of the floating industrial district.		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
L.	Limit development around Copake Lake to protect water quality and encourage historic preservation in Copake Falls.		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Zoning Committee	No Cost
M.	Support further development of the Rail Trail.			Short/Ongoing	Harlem Valley Rail Trail, Town of Copake	Town of Copake, Harlem Valley Rail Trail, NYS OPRHP
N.	Recognize Copake North as an area of significance.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
O.	Explore provision of tax incentives to preserve historic resources.			Medium	Historical Society, Town of Copake	To Be Determined
P.	Encourage low-impact development and sustainable infrastructure where appropriate.		Z	Medium	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
Q.	Develop and maintain a Town-level or multi-town Geographic Information System (GIS).	*		Short	Town of Copake	Town of Copake, Columbia County, NYS DOS Shared Services Grant