

SECTION 10 – HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

7.1 Goals

- > To preserve, interpret, and promote Rockland’s historical resources.
- > To promote year-round cultural events and arts programs for residents and visitors.
- > To enhance and promote year-round recreational opportunities for persons of all ages and abilities.

7.2 Summary of Existing Conditions

The combination of many historical, cultural, and recreational resources give expression to the Town’s sense of place. These resources help attract a diversity of residents and visitors and generate economic opportunities in a rural setting. Roscoe’s renowned position in the history of fly fishing in America stems from deep historical and cultural roots that are anchored around the confluence of two streams sourced from upstream forests. These forests remain havens for outdoor recreation including hiking, camping and horseback riding. Sustaining the health of these resources and their associated year-round activities are central to Rockland’s vision of the future.

7.2.1 Historical Resources

The Town has an appointed historian and other active individuals knowledgeable in the Town’s past.

Rockland’s rich history and historic buildings contribute to its character and community sense of place. The Sullivan County Historical Society website (www.scnyhistory.org) includes a Town of Rockland History, by Wilmer Sipple, former Rockland Town Historian, which explores this history in detail. A brief summary of the Town’s history through the present day provides some historical perspective as follows:

The Town of Rockland’s history is largely tied to the Beaverkill and Willowemoc Creek stream basins. This region was originally the borderland between the Iroquois nations to the north and the Algonquin to the south. The Lenni-Lenapes, a branch of the Delaware tribes, were the predominate Indian group in this



Woman fly fishing, ca. late 19th century



Woman fly fishing, ca. early 21st century

border region. During this time, Rockland was a wild and difficult region to penetrate except by the Indian trails in the area.

The granting of the Hardenburgh Patent to Johannes Hardenburgh in 1709 by England's Queen Ann set the stage for the eventual development of the Catskills. It was an immense tract comprising some two million acres that included what are now Delaware, Greene, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster counties.

Soon thereafter, a new owner, Robert Livingston, appeared on the scene and in less than forty years he acquired title to nearly half of the entire patent. Lands encompassing what is now the Town of Rockland were part of this acquisition.

Following the Revolutionary War, the first settlers in the Town of Rockland were the Jehiel Stewart family and his brother Luther, who settled in Big Beaver Kill Flats around 1789. The location was at the time a part of the town of Rochester in Ulster County. In 1798 it became a part of Neversink and in 1909 a bill was introduced in the legislature to separate the western part of Neversink to form Rockland. The Town of Rockland was legally established on April 1, 1910 by an act of the State of New York and Israel Dodge was its first Supervisor

The area remained remote and difficult to reach until John Hunter turned an old Indian trail into a road. When finished in 1815, it opened up settlements in Shin Creek, Beaverkill, Craig-E-Claire, Turnwood and Rockland. The first settlers worked to clear the forests for homes and farm land, and this activity provided an early source of income because of the ready market for logs and lumber. Logs were lashed together forming rafts to float down the Willowemoc and Beaverkill streams and then down the Delaware River to Trenton and Philadelphia.

With the improvement of roads into the area, the life of settlers became easier as business began to boom and new settlers came to share in the area's abundance. The arrival of railroads in the mid 1800s opened up the area and promoted the rise of the great resort era and many agricultural dairy farms. The construction of Route 17 through Rockland in the 1960s further boosted the tourist-based economy even as railroads and dairy farming declined.

Following the decline of tourism and resort era hotels in the mid-1970s, Rockland's economy and that of Sullivan County was largely mired for several decades in a recession. This period of decline lasted through the nation-wide economic recessionary period of 2008-2012.

Today, there is a resurgence of tourists coming from the NY metropolitan area. Increased tourism has helped to promote economic growth in Rockland and in its hamlets of Roscoe and Livingston Manor. The proximity of both hamlets first to the railroad and then to Route 17 has caused them to become the commercial, cultural and civic centers of the Town.

7.2.1.1 *Historical Surveys*

Two historical surveys were undertaken in recent years. In 2012 the *Reconnaissance-Level Historic*

Resource Survey of the Lower Beaverkill Valley was completed, and in 2015, the *Livingston Manor Historic Survey* was completed. These surveys are valuable to the Town and to this plan because they provide a wealth of information and provide recommended actions. The following summaries of these surveys inform this discussion, while the recommended actions are condensed and adapted into the recommendations, giving direction to the Town's historic preservation efforts.

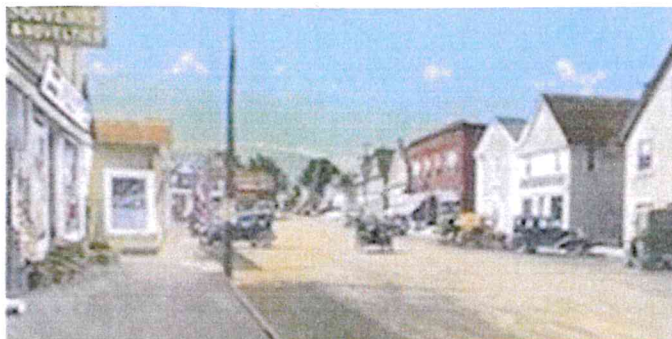
Beaverkill Valley survey

The scope of this survey covers a sizeable portion of the Town including the hamlet of Roscoe. Well-researched and footnoted, it incorporates a breadth of historical influences, illustrating the development of natural resource-based settlements, the rise of sport fishing and tourism, and the impacts of the railroad and the automobile. The majority of its recommendations are focused on conducting more intensive level surveys, including further documentation on the post-WWII residential subdivision at Miller heights; the potential designation of historical districts at Rock Flats and Beaverkill, and the protection of the Beaverkill area through the designation of a Critical Environmental Area.

Livingston Manor survey

The survey focused on the hamlet, inventoried 216 properties, identified 94 of these as “notable”, and of the 94, selected 34 as potentially eligible for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. This detailed and comprehensive account of the development of Livingston Manor is accompanied by numerous photographs and is a noteworthy addition to the historical documentation in the Town. Consistent with the Beaverkill survey, a recommended action in Livingston Manor is to conduct more detailed inventories for the notable properties. Also recommended is the undertaking of a hamlet revitalization plan to help guide new development, both in terms of location and historical oriented design.

Both surveys recommend that the Town consider the enactment of a historic preservation ordinance and that the survey reports and related documentation of historic properties be published. Recommendations centering on further documentation or the development of revitalization plans could benefit from the engagement of students in related university programs. In terms of enacting a town historic preservation ordinance, there are many sources of assistance. The two town surveys and the partners involved in their creation also place the Town at an advantage for taking the next steps suggested in the surveys.



Post card view of Main Street, Livingston Manor, ca. 1925



Chester Darby house, Roscoe, ca. 1870

7.2.1.2 Covered Bridges

Three of the four remaining covered bridges in Sullivan County are in Rockland. All these bridges are open to vehicles and have adjacent recreational areas.

Beaverkill Covered Bridge

Erected in 1865, this bridge played a role in connecting civilization with some of the remaining wild interior lands of the Catskills. As access to the Beaver Kill increased and it became popular for fishing, the state began constructing camping areas in the 1920s and the Beaverkill Campground became the second in the Catskill Park. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps did extensive work to improve the grounds, including building 30 individual campsites with fireplaces and tables, stone walls along the river's edge, two sets of bathhouses, a picnic area with 15 fireplaces and tables, a reservoir, and 3,000 feet of piping.

The early years of the 21st century brought increased structural deterioration to the bridge and its abutments. With assistance from the State of New York, a \$2.6 million repair and restoration project was begun in 2015 and completed in 2017. The bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 3, 2007.

Livingston Manor Covered Bridge

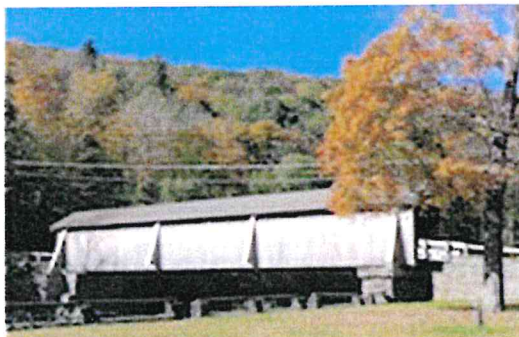
This bridge, connecting old Route 17 with Livingston Manor, was built in 1860. Originally known as Mott Flats Bridge, and also called the Van Tran Bridge, the structure was restored in the mid-1980s by the Sullivan County Department of Public Works. Adjacent to the approximately 100' wooden span is Covered Bridge Park, an open area along the Willowemoc Creek providing fishing access, picnic areas, and a pavilion with restrooms.

Bendo Covered Bridge

Located on Conklin Hill Road, the name of this bridge is derived from Bend of the River Bridge. Less than 50' long, the bridge was built in 1913 and is a piece of a former bridge located in Livingston Manor. Adjacent to north side of the bridge is the private Covered Bridge Campsites. On the south side of the bridge, the land is owned by the State of New York.



Livingston Manor Covered Bridge, ca. 1860



Beaverkill Covered Bridge, ca. 1865

7.2.1.3 Resources on the National Register of Historic Places

In addition to the Beaverkill Covered Bridge, there are four other resources on the register. (Figure 7-1, Cultural & Historic sites).

Roscoe Presbyterian Church and Westfield Flats Cemetery

The church and cemetery are located in the hamlet of Roscoe. The church was built about 1884 and was spared during the 1916 downtown fire which destroyed 23 buildings. The adjacent cemetery, whose name is the former name of the hamlet of Roscoe, contains about 200 burials, with the earliest dating to the first decade of the 19th century. The site was listed on the register on June 8, 2001.

Dundas Castle

The castle, also known as Craig E. Clair Castle, is a historic house near the hamlet of Craigie Clair along the Beaverkill. Modeled after Dundas Castle, Scotland, the structure was completed in 1924 and has changed owners a number of times. The building and grounds have been neglected for several years and remain in private hands. It was added to the Register on March 21, 2001.

Agudas Achim Synagogue

The synagogue is a historic building on Rock Avenue in Livingston Manor that was listed on the Register on November 19, 1998. Built in 1920 to serve the Jewish population of the Catskills, it possesses mixed architectural influences and unique interior and exterior features.

Rockland Mill Complex

The mill is a national historic district located just north of downtown Roscoe along Route 91. As described on Wikipedia, the district includes four contributing buildings and three contributing structures. They include the grist mill (ca. 1850) containing much of its original machinery; remains of the original power canal, mill pond, and tailrace with stone retaining walls; tenant house (ca. 1850); proprietor's house (1867); and ice house (1867–1900). The district was listed on the register August 23, 1984.

7.2.2 Cultural Resources

The Roscoe O&W Railway Museum

During its heyday in the early part of the 20th Century, the New York, Ontario & Western Railway



Dundas Castle, ca. 1924



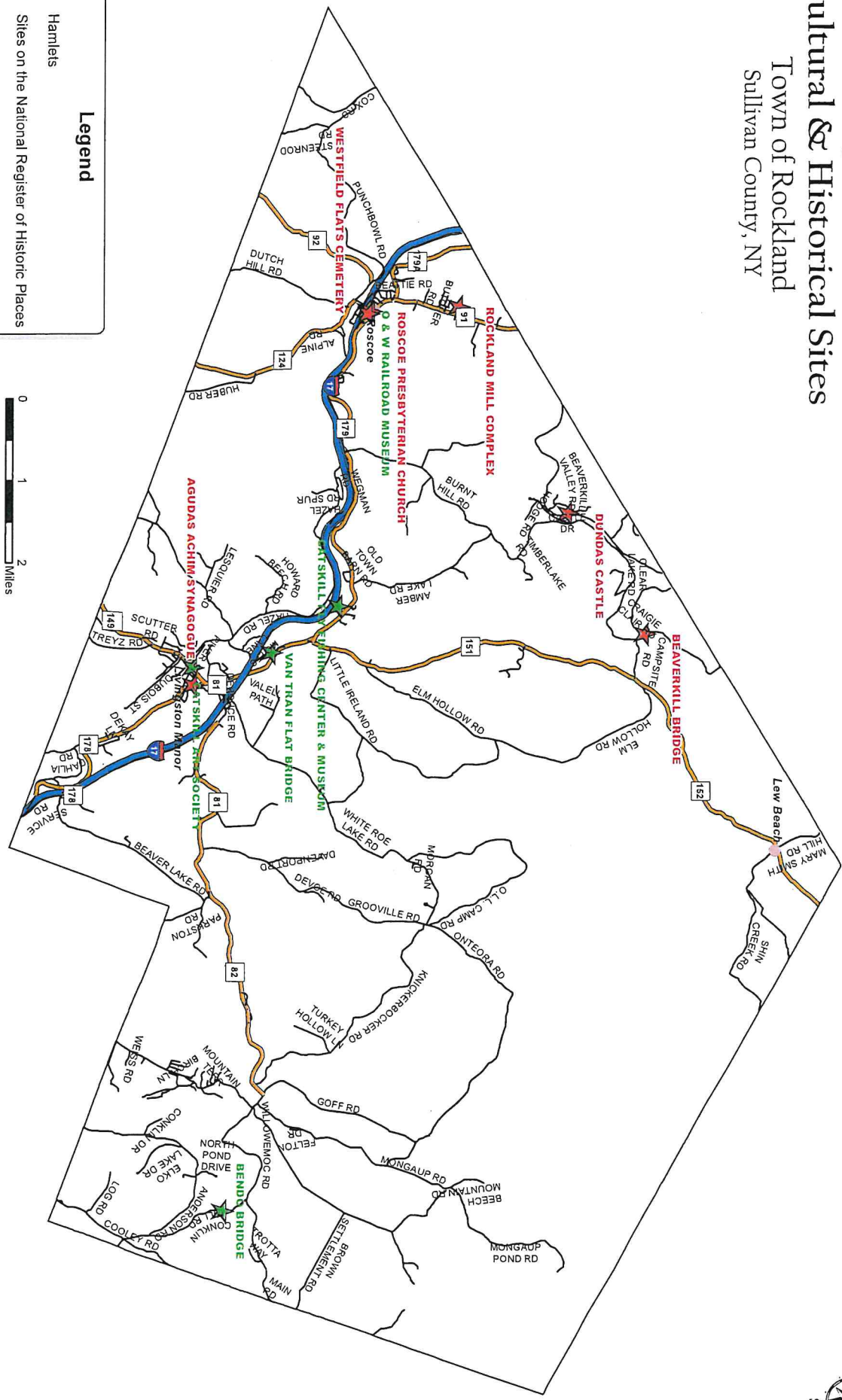
Agudas Achim Synagogue, ca. 1920

Figure 7-1
 Cultural & Historical Sites
 Town of Rockland
 Sullivan County, NY

- Legend**
- Hamlets
 - Sites on the National Register of Historic Places
 - Cultural Sites



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stretched from Weehawken, NJ, through Livingston Manor and Roscoe, to Oswego, NY, where connections could be made to Chicago. The railroad contributed significantly to the rise in tourism, recreation, and commercial development of the Town. In 1984, more than 30 years after the last passenger train departed Roscoe, the Roscoe O&W Railway Museum was established under the charter of the Ontario & Western Railway Historical Society. Spending its early years in a caboose, the museum, at the site of the former Roscoe Station, has steadily grown into an attractive destination with many historical artifacts of the former railway added over the years.

As described on the museum's webpage (www.nyow.org/museum.html), which is part of the society's website, the museum complex consists of the O&W refurbished caboose, the original trout weather vane and train signal, the Cooks Falls and Roscoe watchman's shanties, the Beaverkill Trout Car (which released fish into local waters from Long Island hatcheries), and the O&W station motif building. The museum contains O&W artifacts and memorabilia, other railroadiana, and local history displays showing the impact of the O&W on community life, hunting, fishing, farming, tourism and local industries. The O&W Railway Historical Society remains quite active, maintaining an informative website; supporting model railroading displays; preserving railroad equipment, artifacts, and thousands of archives; and publishing many articles, books, and photos.

Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum

A celebration of the many facets of the area's tremendous fly fishing heritage, the Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum began in 1983 and opened at its present location in 1995. Located along Willowemoc Creek between Livingston Manor and Roscoe, the 53-acre site features a historical and contemporary museum, an education center, public fishing access, and a nature trail. The center is open seven days a week from April through October.

The Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum is a nonprofit organization. The center's website (www.cffcm.com) explains the many exhibits and programs in the context of its mission to preserve America's fly fishing heritage, teach its younger generations of fly fishers, and promote the future of fly fishing.

Among the many resources and offerings of the center are the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame, Heritage Craft Center, Demarest Rodmakers Gallery, Poul Jorgensen Golden Hook Award, Catskill Rodmakers



Roscoe O&W Railroad Museum



Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum

Gathering, Hardy Cup, Wulff Gallery, Catskill Rodmakers Workshop, and Arts of the Angler Craft Center. Educational programs have covered river ecology, angling history, stream craft, including fishing etiquette, fly tying, fly casting, aquatic entomology, and stream improvement to increase public awareness of the values of fly fishing. The center also serves a stewardship role in preserving Junction Pool, the famed fly fishing confluence of the Beaver Kill and the Willowemoc Creek.

Catskill Art Society

Livingston Manor is home to the Catskill Art Society (CAS), a nonprofit organization founded in 1971 whose mission is cultivating public interest, participation, and enjoyment of the arts; and through its 4,500 square-foot multi-arts center, CAS explores contemporary art practices and facilitates creative and professional development for established and emerging artists.

CAS is dedicated to presenting multi-disciplinary programming in all art forms with a combination of local and national artists. CAS features artwork on a regular basis and, through its guidelines, invites submissions across disciplines. The Society occupies a renovated historic building on Main Street, helping to anchor the diversity of activities in the hamlet. CAS also strives to be a regional destination, serving the greater community through its facility which features plenty of natural light, galleries, a multi-purpose teaching studio, a clay studio, and an art library with digital learning resources. CAS also organizes the annual Trout Parade in cooperation with the Livingston Manor Chamber of Commerce and many others. Looking toward the future, CAS plans to add performance and exhibition spaces. More information is available at catskillartsociety.org.

Bethel Woods Center for the Arts

Built adjacent to the historic site of the 1969 Woodstock Festival and opened in 2006, Bethel Woods is located about 17 miles south of Livingston Manor in the town of Bethel. Founded by Alan Gerry, entrepreneur and philanthropist from nearby Liberty, the site features the 15,000-seat indoor-outdoor concert Pavilion, a 1,000-seat outdoor terrace stage, a 440-seat indoor hall, the Woodstock Festival Field, the Museum at Bethel Woods, and event spaces and classrooms. Outdoor concerts and events run June through September, while year-round programming and exhibits are held in the other venues. Prior to the creation of Bethel Woods, the original festival site has been a longtime draw for visitors and, in the 1990s, the scene of events organized by the Gerry Foundation. The museum, which celebrates the original festival, is aptly described on Roscoe's website as an immersive and captivating multi-media experience



Catskill Art Society



Catskill Art Society, childrens art class

that combines film and interactive displays, text panels and artifacts to explore the unique experience of the Woodstock festival, its significance as a culminating event of a decade of radical cultural, transformation, and the legacy of the Sixties and Woodstock today. The entire Bethel Woods complex is a positive, regional economic driver in the region that plays a primary role in the revitalization of tourism and complements the many resources in the town of Rockland.

Shandee Music Festival

Located south of Rockland in the town of Callicoon, the Shandee Music Festival encourages and promotes the careers of young, exceptional classical musicians through an annual series of summer concerts. SMF's Sunset Concert Pavilion and bucolic festival grounds have been a consistent attraction for concert goers and a formative venue for talented young musicians. SMF is also a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1993. In helping young musicians pursue professional careers as concert artists, SMF assists students in playing music in local schools and special care facilities, along with larger venues such as Bethel Woods.

Livingston Manor and Roscoe Free Libraries

The libraries, also described in Section 6, Community Services, are part of the Ramapo Catskill Library System, which includes 47 libraries and encompasses parts of four counties. The libraries offer a variety of services – public use computers, internet and Wi-Fi access, printers and fax – but also serve as community gathering spaces on a regular basis. Special programs are featured, and the spaces in the libraries are often used as meeting places. Both libraries are active in community events and are open to exploring new ways to further engage the community. The Roscoe library also serves as the repository for historical information, as the town historian is also the librarian.

7.2.2.1 Town events

The Town of Rockland has a number of community organizations and businesses who are regularly involved in a wide range of activities, programs, and events, as listed on www.livingstonmanor.org and www.roscoenv.com. Three of the larger and most well know community cultural events are the Rotary Ice Carnival and the Trout Parade held in Livingston Manor and the Fourth of July parade in Roscoe.

Rotary Ice Carnival

The ice carnival has been part of the Livingston Manor community for 59 years. Held in January and organized by the Rotary Club and other partners, the all-day event includes a snow sculpture contest, a dance at the school, crowning of the ice carnival king and queen, performances by ice skaters, horse-drawn sleigh rides, and snowshoe and skating races.

Trout Parade

The annual Trout Parade is held in Livingston Manor on the second Saturday in June. Organized by the Catskill Art Society (CAS) in partnership with the Livingston Manor Chamber of Commerce, this street fair brings the community together and encourages artistic expression through the creation of fish-themed floats and costumes for marching in the parade and by the display of student works in the windows of



Rotary Ice Carnival - ice skating event



Trout Parade

local businesses. This heritage celebration was begun in 2004 and includes marching bands, performing arts, live music, and merchandise tables.

7.2.3 Recreational Resources

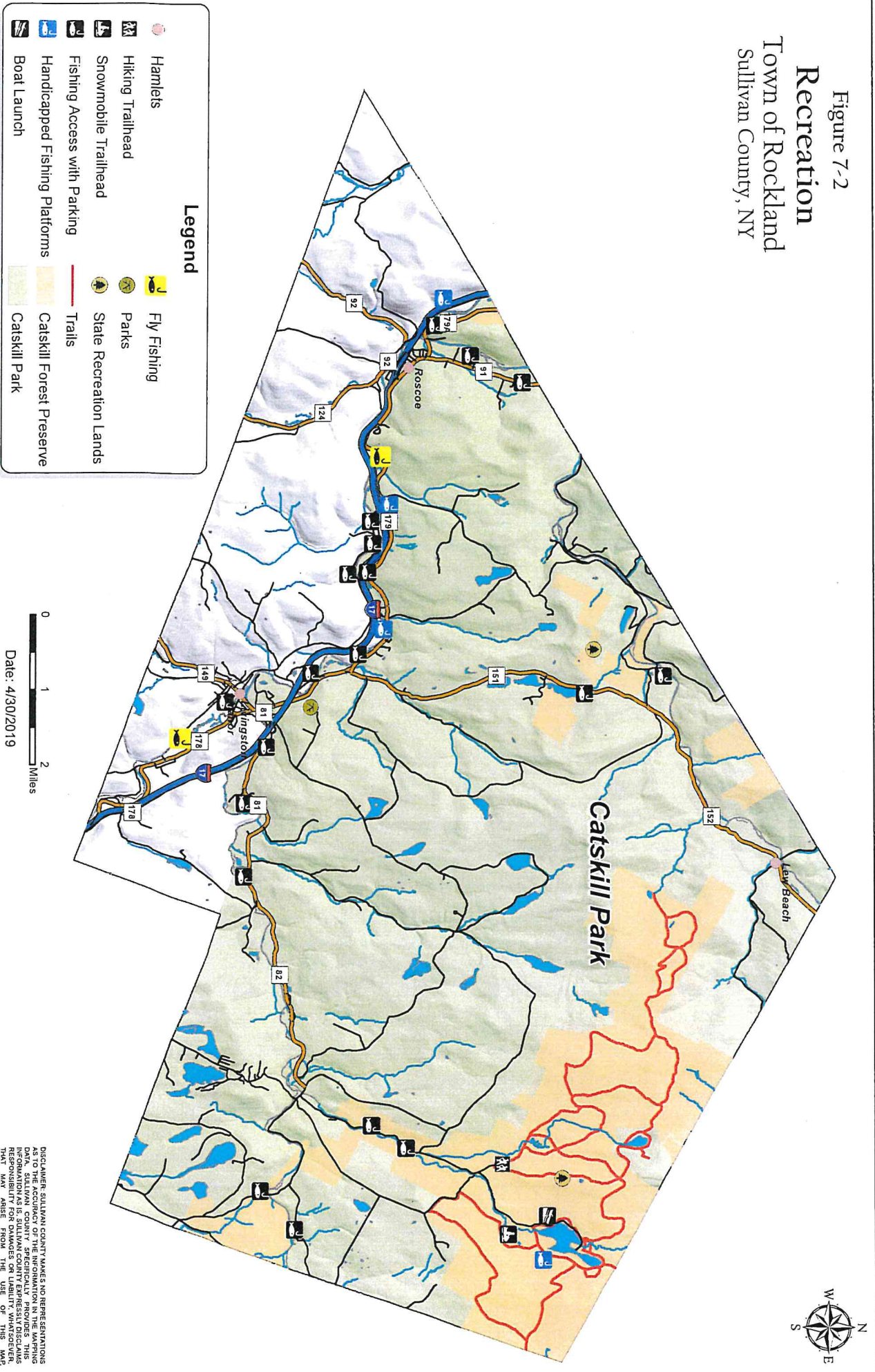
Catskill Park and Catskill Forest Preserve

In addition to Rockland's predominantly rural and low-density land use pattern, about 80 percent of the Town's area lies within the Catskill Park, and approximately 16 percent of that area includes the Catskill Forest Preserve (see Figure 7-2, Recreation).

The 705,500-acre Catskill Park is defined by its "blue line" boundary, which encompasses all or part of a number counties and municipalities and is characterized by the mix of public and private lands within this boundary. Approximately 41 percent of the lands within the Park are part of the Catskill Forest Preserve. Forest preserve lands are protected by Article XIV of the New York State Constitution, which designates this land as "forever wild." Classifications of forest preserve lands are Wilderness, Wild Forest, Primitive Bicycle Corridors, Intensive Use Areas, and Administrative Areas. The forest preserve lands in the town of Rockland consist primarily of the Willowemoc Wild Forest, the Beaverkill and Mongaup Pond Campgrounds (Intensive Use Areas), and the Catskill Fish Hatchery (Administrative Area).

The Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (NYSDEC, 2008) includes statistics on the Park's resources. The 242-acre Beaverkill Campground has 109 camping sites, a camping capacity of 654, and a picnic capacity of 300. The 680-acre Mongaup Pond Campground has 163 camping sites, a camping capacity of 978, and a picnic capacity of 450; additionally, there is a 150' beach and a launch for small, non-motorized boats. Willowemoc Wild Forest offers a variety of recreational facilities including 29 miles of snowmobile trail suitable for horse and mountain bicycle use as well as 26 miles of hiking/cross-country ski trails and a leanto at Long Pond. The Catskill Fish Hatchery near DeBruce produces an average of 120,000 pounds of brown and brook trout yearly for stocking the waters of New York State. The hatchery is regularly toured by groups of school children and attracts an estimated 5,000 visitors each summer. Adjacent to the hatchery is Camp DeBruce, a NYSDEC summer camp for youth. Based on environmental educational programming, campers are exposed to new skills, including archery, canoeing, fishing, fly-tying, birding, and can engage in sportsman education classes.

Figure 7-2
Recreation
 Town of Rockland
 Sullivan County, NY



Both Livingston Manor and Roscoe are primary gateways to the Park, leading to numerous forest preserve resources in and beyond the Town. In addition to accessing the forest preserve resources via these hamlets, there are numerous other noteworthy recreational destinations in the forest preserve to the north. These include, the Balsam Lake Fire Tower, Alder Lake, Little Pond Campground, Big Pond, several lean-tos, and numerous miles of hiking trails. During hunting season, the expansive tracts of forest preserve are a major attraction, boosting local economic activity. To the south of Roscoe in the town of Fremont is Crystal Lake Wild Forest. This is a 497-acre detached parcel of the forest preserve that includes a man-made lake, a short hiking trail with opportunities for camping, boating and fishing.

Fishing

Rockland's many pristine lakes and streams, along with extensive public access to them, contribute to the Town's reputation as an angler's paradise. The Town boasts many public access points to world-class fly fishing streams that are secured by public fishing rights (PFRs) (Figure 7-2). PFRs are permanent easements purchased by the NYSDEC from willing landowners, giving anglers the right to fish and walk along the bank (usually a 33' strip on one or both banks of the stream). The majority of lands adjacent to the Willowemoc Creek are accessible via PFRs. Key access points are marked by yellow-on-brown wooden DEC signs. While access to private lands along some streams is not granted to the general public, fishing clubs and resorts do account for additional access to recreational fishing, which complements public fishing opportunities in the Town.

Boating

Non-motorized boating is also a popular activity. In addition to Mongaup Pond, Crystal Lake, and other destinations mentioned above, Waneta Lake along the Beaverkill Road is a public destination with accessible fishing, picnicking, and car-top boat access.



Couple fishing (Beaverkill)



Catch of the day (Willowemoc Creek)

Camping

The Town features a full range of camping opportunities. Two of New York State's seven public campgrounds in the Catskill Park are in Rockland (Beaverkill and Mongaup Pond). A third, Little Pond, is located just three miles from the town's northern boundary. Rockland is also home to three private campgrounds: Roscoe Campsites; Covered Bridge Campsite; and Hunter Lake Campgrounds. On forest preserve lands, there are lean-tos, designated campsites, and an abundance of primitive camping opportunities, consistent with NYS regulations.

Hunting

Rockland serves as a major attraction and gateway for numerous types of hunting. New York State has designated seasons for Wild Turkey, Deer, Black Bear, Waterfowl, Migratory Game Birds, Furbearer, and Small Game Hunting. The arrival of deer season each fall helps support many local businesses in the community, including motels, restaurants, outdoor stores and food markets.

7.2.3.1 Community Parks.

In addition to recreation opportunities noted above, the Town is fortunate to have a several community parks located in or near Roscoe and Livingston Manor. These parks are open to the public and owned and maintained either by the Town, County, local school districts, local fire departments, and private individuals and organizations.

Covered Bridge Park. As discussed above, this park is located next to the Livingston Manor Covered Bridge along the Willowemoc Creek. The park offers excellent stream access, along with picnic areas, a pavilion and restrooms. The park is owned and maintained by Sullivan County.

Rotary Park. Located in Livingston Manor, the park is privately owned and maintained and is open to the public. It has two baseball fields, a multi-purpose soccer field, winter ice skating rink, playground equipment and restrooms. The park hosts the outdoor activities of the Ice Carnival each January. Under current plans to convert the adjacent O&W railbed into a recreational trail, the park will serve as a connecting trailhead.

Renaissance Park. Located in the center of Livingston Manor, the park is privately owned and maintained. It provides access to the Little Beaverkill and Willowemoc Creek. The park has a pavilion and is a gathering place for community activities. Livingston Manor Renaissance volunteers maintain the native plant garden and flower boxes at the park. The park is also an anchor on the proposed River Walk trail, which will provide enhanced access to the Willowemoc Creek by way of a linear park paralleling Main Street.

Round Top Trails. Located in Livingston Manor at the edge of Orchard Street Cemetery, the park is owned and maintained by the Town with help from a volunteer group. It features two uphill loop trails (.6 mile and .2 mile) on Round Top mountain with trailhead access near the mountain's base. The trails are



Renaissance Park entrance



Playground equipment (Livingston Manor Central School)

connected to each other with one loop featuring a scenic hamlet overlook while the other reaches Round Top's summit at an elevation of about 1,820 feet.

Riverside Park. This park is located in Roscoe and is owned and maintained by the Town. Opened in 2009, it features walking trails, three picnic areas, and access for fishing on the Willowemoc Creek.

Roscoe-Rockland Fireman's Field. Fireman's field is owned by the Roscoe-Rockland Fire Company and has a baseball field, several pavilions, and rest room facilities. In addition to firefighting training, the site may be used for a fee for certain events (e.g., parties, weddings) with permission from the fire company. Public events such as live music also take place.

Beaverkill Valley Fire Department Park. Located in Lew Beach next to the Beaverkill firehouse, the park is available for fire department members and their families. The park has a utility field/baseball field and a playground set with benches. The park can also be used by non-members for a fee.

School Facilities and Playgrounds. Livingston Manor and Roscoe Central Schools each have two baseball fields, a football field, a soccer field, a basketball court, one or more tennis courts, and a playground. LMCS also has a running track.

7.3 Recommendations

Strategy 1 Strengthen partnerships

- Action 1.1 *Actively engage with the DEC and outdoor recreation stakeholders in the development and update of Unit Management Plans, the Catskill Region Recreation Master Plan, and other projects related to the outdoor resources of the Catskill Forest Preserve and Park.*
- Action 1.2 *Increase coordination among successful events and their sponsoring groups to further advance year-round activity calendars and related promotional events.*
- Action 1.3 *Seek to establish an events schedule on the Town's website and social media sites*

to promote community participation and year-round visitation to the Town. The schedule could include events such the Trout parade and Ice Carnival as well school plays and musical concerts, senior center lectures and events, and agritourism events sponsored by local farms.

Strategy 2 Enhance existing resources and explore the creation of new facilities.

- Action 2.1 *Pursue opportunities to better integrate local parks within a larger network through physical connections.* For example, the future O&W rail trail (i.e., linear park) could be connected to both Rotary Park and to a new sidewalk on Pleasant Street leading to Downtown Livingston Manor. The proposed River Walk Trail will be linked to Renaissance Park and the Downtown Livingston Manor sidewalk network.
- Action 2.2 *Explore connecting Roscoe and Livingston Manor via foot and bicycle paths.*
- Action 2.3 *Showcase the Town's many parks and recreation attractions as a whole.* Utilize interpretive media including printed and web-based as well as existing Downtown kiosks and new kiosks at other strategic locations such as the municipal parking lot. This effort could also include development of a mobile phone wayfinding application discussed in Section 5, Commercial Areas and in Section 9, Transportation.
- Action 2.4 *Improve access to community parks by improving hamlet walkability.* Connecting public parks via sidewalks and ADA compliant crosswalks would improve pedestrian safety and convenience.
- Action 2.5 *Assess existing bike routes and any new routes for adequate signage and promotional materials.* For example, bike routes could be included in the wayfinding mobile phone application discussed in Section 9, Transportation.
- Action 2.6 *Explore the creation of new parks, including reuse of lands at the former poultry processing plant, the former airport, and other locations.*
- Action 2.7 *Explore development of a community center.* Identify potential locations, partners, and types of programs and facilities, e.g., recreation hall, fitness equipment, and meeting space.
- Action 2.8 *Explore the creation of a Town parks & recreation department.* This department would improve maintenance and general upkeep of existing and future recreation facilities including parks, walkways and trails, and bicycle

paths. Personnel could also assist at Town events such as the Trout Parade and 4th of July parade.

Action 2.9 *Explore the creation of a visitors' center for the western gateway to the Catskill Park. A visitors' center can orient arriving visitors and interpret the resources in and out of the Catskill Park. One potential location for such a center is adjacent to the O&W caboose located next to the Route 17 exit ramp at Livingston Manor.*

Action 2.10 *Continue to support efforts to complete the Livingston Manor Riverwalk Trail.*

Priority Action 2.11 *Continue to coordinate with Sullivan County to construct the planned O&W rail trail. This trail would start in Livingston Manor and travel some 50 miles to Summitville in the Town of Mamakating. In part, the trail would be a tourist attraction that would provide a big boost to the local economy in Livingston Manor and to all municipalities along its path.*

Action 2.11 *Coordinate with NYSDEC to develop a scenic loop bike trail that would start and end near the Beaver Kill covered bridge. The trail would be a popular recreational attraction for tourists visiting the Town, which in turn would enhance the local economy.*

Action 2.12 *Encourage proposed subdivisions to develop multi-use pathways and linking of open spaces. Subdivision plans should recognize and address this through the creation of pathways for walking and/or biking that connect to other trails, recreational spaces, or areas of Town. Open spaces that are created or maintained by the design of a subdivision should consider trail connections to other similar open spaces where opportunities present.*

Strategy 3 Advance historic preservation efforts.

Action 3.1 *Work with historic resource partners to explore advancing recommended actions from the Bearverkill Valley and Livingston Manor historic surveys.*

Action 3.2 *Explore development of historical walking tours for community use and to promote historic tourism. Utilize the Town's historians and information from the Bearverkill Valley and Livingston Manor historic inventory surveys to identify historic buildings of local interest or importance to include on the tour.*

Action 3.3 *Consider enacting a town historic preservation ordinance that will allow the local designation of historic landmarks and districts.*

Action 3.4 *Consult with the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the eligibility of notable properties for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.*

Action 3.5 *Post historic survey reports and documentation of historic properties on the Town's website to raise awareness and encourage participation in the Town's historic preservation efforts.*

Action 3.5 *Post historic survey reports and documentation of historic properties on the Town's website to raise awareness and encourage participation in the Town's historic preservation efforts.*

Action 3.6 *Work to build on the Town's historical assets, cultural events, and arts programs as a complementary theme for tourism, recreation, and economic development.*

Strategy 4 Work to provide recreational opportunities for persons with special needs.

Action 4.1 *Seek to identify playground equipment that may be appropriate for flood-prone hamlet parks that would accommodate special needs persons including mobility challenged persons. Such equipment is versatile and can be used by children of all ages and abilities.*

Action 4.2 *Encourage the development of multi-use trails and walkways that are accessible to special needs persons including mobility impaired persons.*

Strategy 5 Seek governmental and private sector funding opportunities.

Action 5.1 *Community stakeholder groups and organizations should work regularly with Town government to explore and develop funding opportunities to accomplish objectives in this section.*

SECTION 8 - ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

8.1 Goals

- > To protect, promote, and enhance Rockland's natural resources and environmental assets.

8.2 Summary of Existing Conditions

The Town of Rockland is rich in environmental resources. Environmental resources include both natural resources and environmental assets. *Natural resources* are defined as materials or substances such as minerals, forests, water, and fertile land that occur in nature and can be used for economic gain; whereas *environmental assets* cover a broader range, inclusive of natural resources and incorporating scenic, aesthetic, recreational, and ecological values. While not focused primarily on economic gain, environmental assets typically have many indirect economic benefits.

The abundance of Rockland's environmental resources can be attributed in large part to the rural nature of the Town. At 41.5 persons per square mile, the Town's population density is comparatively sparse, especially when factoring in the higher concentrations of people in the hamlets of Livingston Manor and Roscoe. Rockland is characterized by widespread mature forests within a mix of public and private lands, providing for ample recreational pursuits and timber harvesting opportunities. The area's geology also supports bluestone quarrying and extraction of gravel products. The northern section of the Town is the most mountainous and contains the county's highest point, Beech Hill (3118'). This area comprises large portions of the Beaver Kill and Willowemoc Creek watersheds, whose high water quality and scenic beauty contribute to the Town's prominence as a world-class trout-fishing destination. The Town's hydrologic resources also support its drinking water supply system, which is protected in part through aquifer protection districts in the zoning law.

A large number of public access opportunities provide a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities in a natural setting. Activities include hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cycling, boating, and birding. The Catskill Forest Preserve, which comprises some 16 percent of the Town's area, includes two state-run campgrounds with facilities and programs for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. These opportunities are complemented by the Town's parks, which are concentrated in and around the two major hamlets.

Collectively, Rockland's exceptional environmental resources contribute to the Town's quality of life, attracting second homeowners and full-time residents, as well as tourists and outdoor enthusiasts. Lodging establishments, restaurants, realtors, private campgrounds, outfitters and other businesses in the Town benefit directly from the rural, scenic character of the Town, while forestry related businesses are supported by the Town's abundant woodlands.

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Beaver Kill

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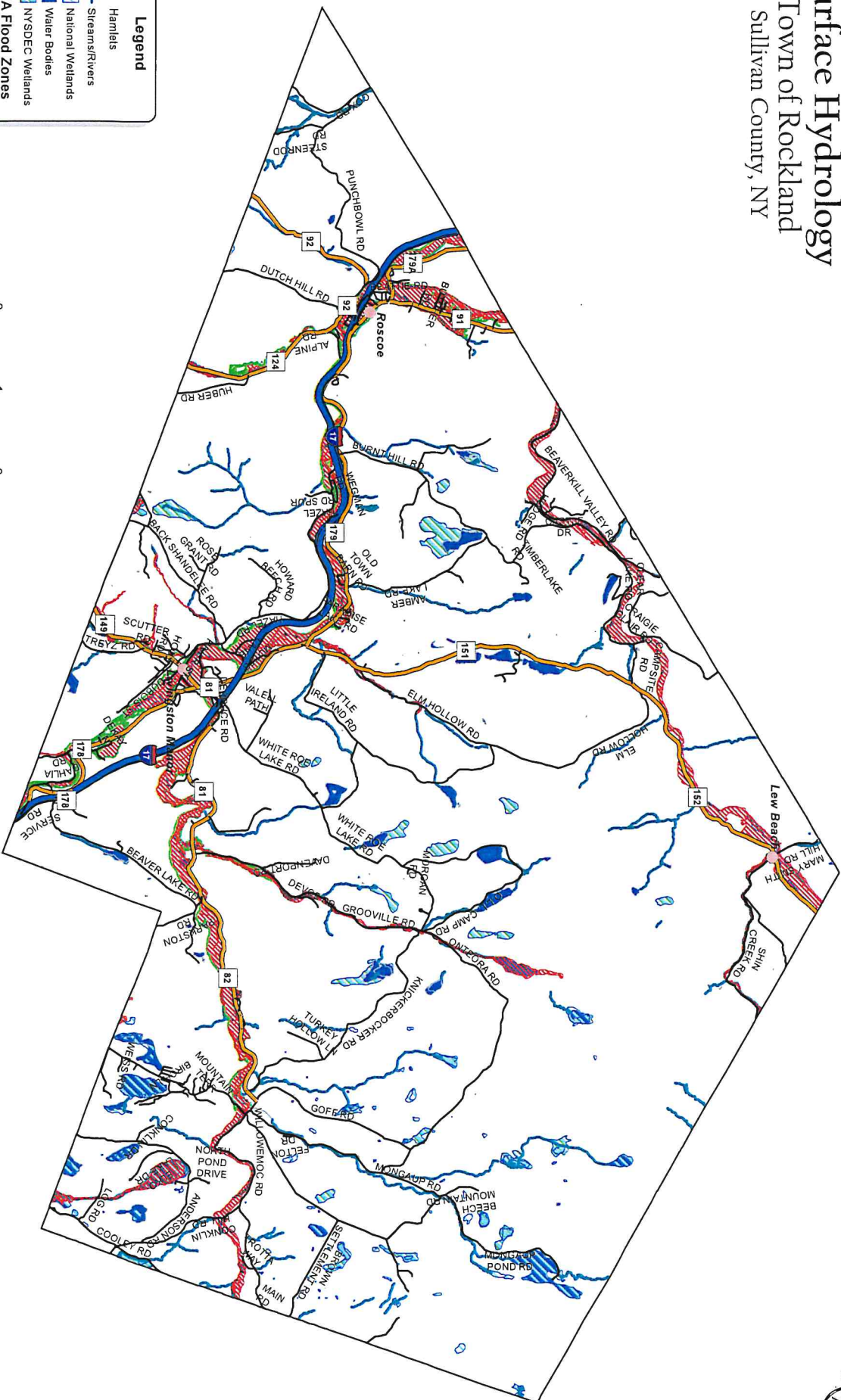
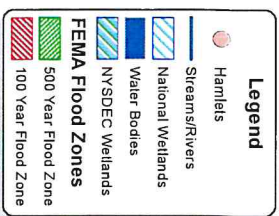
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Figure 8-1
Surface Hydrology
 Town of Rockland
 Sullivan County, NY



DISCLAIMER: SULLIVAN COUNTY MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS AS TO THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION IN THE MAPPING INFORMATION AS IS. SULLIVAN COUNTY EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGES OR LIABILITY, WHATSOEVER, THAT MAY ARISE FROM THE USE OF THIS MAP.

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The soils of the Town of Rockland fall into two general soil groups according to the Sullivan County Soil Survey issued in 1989. The survey further provides detailed soil maps and descriptions of soil types. The predominant general group, covering the majority of the Town, is the Willowemoc-Mongaup-Lewbeach group, which is characterized as nearly level to very steep, moderately deep and very deep, moderately well drained and well drained, medium textured soils; on uplands in the area of the Catskill Mountains. The Chesire-Tunkhannock group, which is found in a broad swath paralleling Willowemoc Creek, is described as nearly level to very steep, very deep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained, medium textured soils; in valleys and on valley sides (see also Figure 8-2, Hydric Soils).

8.2.5 Topography

The Town's topography consists of steep mountainous areas with stream valleys at their base and areas of relatively flat lands and gentle rolling hills (see Figure 3-1, Location Map, page 3.2). The hamlets of Livingston Manor and Roscoe sit at elevations of 1400 and 1300 feet respectively, while mountaintop portions of the town reach 2000 to over 3000 feet in elevation. As shown in Figure 8-3, Steep Slopes, most of the mountainous areas have steep slopes of 20% and up. Steep slopes of 20% or more present environmental concerns and constraints to development. Careless development to sloped areas can cause significant negative effects such as soil erosion and increased sediment runoff and flooding to downstream waterways. Disturbance to these areas can also mar scenic views and disrupt unique ecosystems.

8.2.6 Geology

The Town of Rockland is located along the north-eastern edge of the Allegheny Plateau formed from sedimentary deposits due to the erosion of the Acadian Mountains to the east. They washed into what was an ancient inland ocean, resulting in the formation of the "Catskill Delta."

Bedrock found in the Town of Rockland was created during the late Devonian period that extended from 410 to 360 million years ago. It consists of conglomerate and sandstone interspersed with shale. The coarse-grained layers of bedrock have proved to be very erosion resistant, leaving in place many of the



Mountains, forested lands, and gently rolling hills (view from Foxwillow Farm)

Figure 8-2
Hydric Soils
 Town of Rockland
 Sullivan County, NY

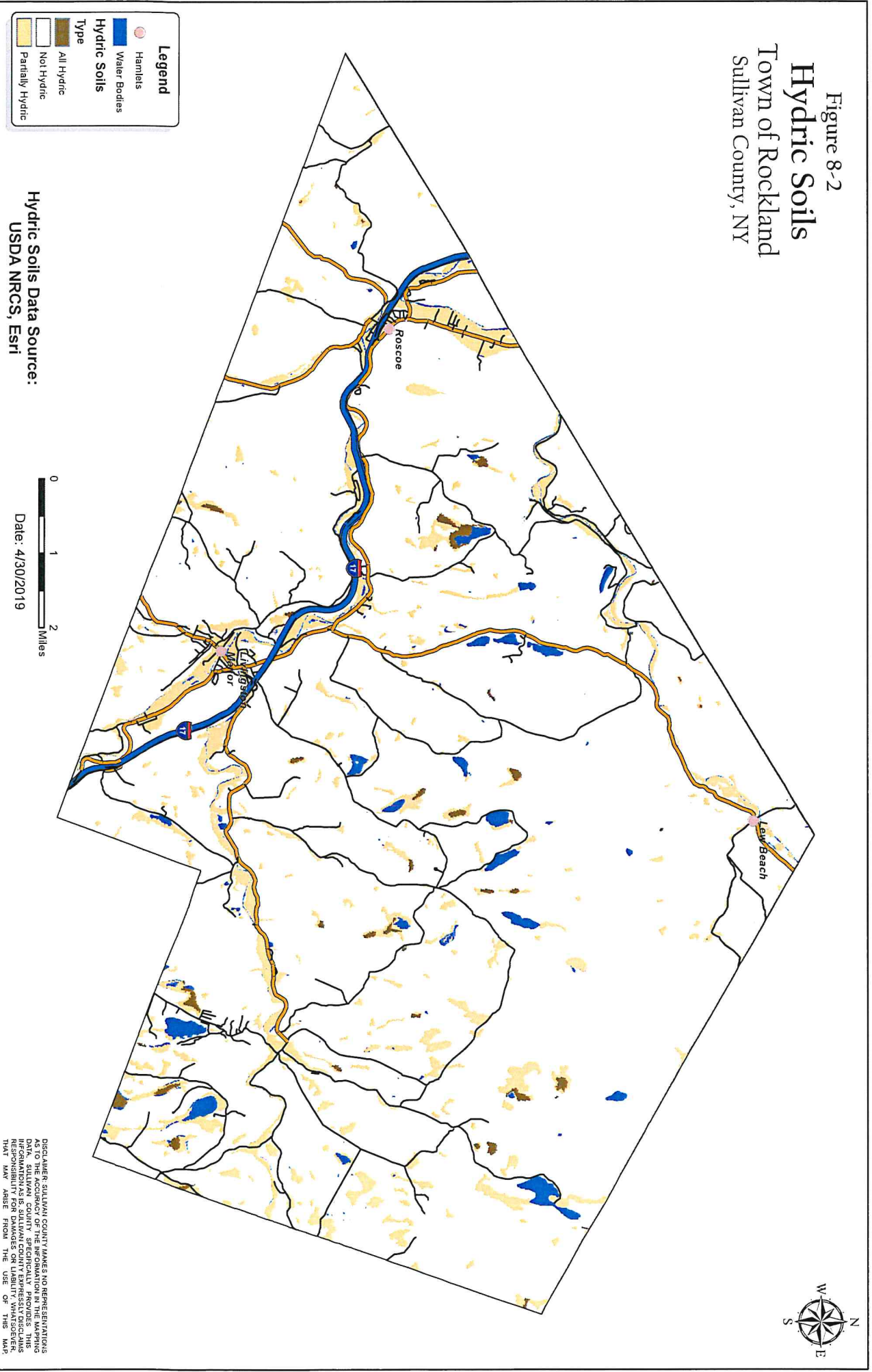
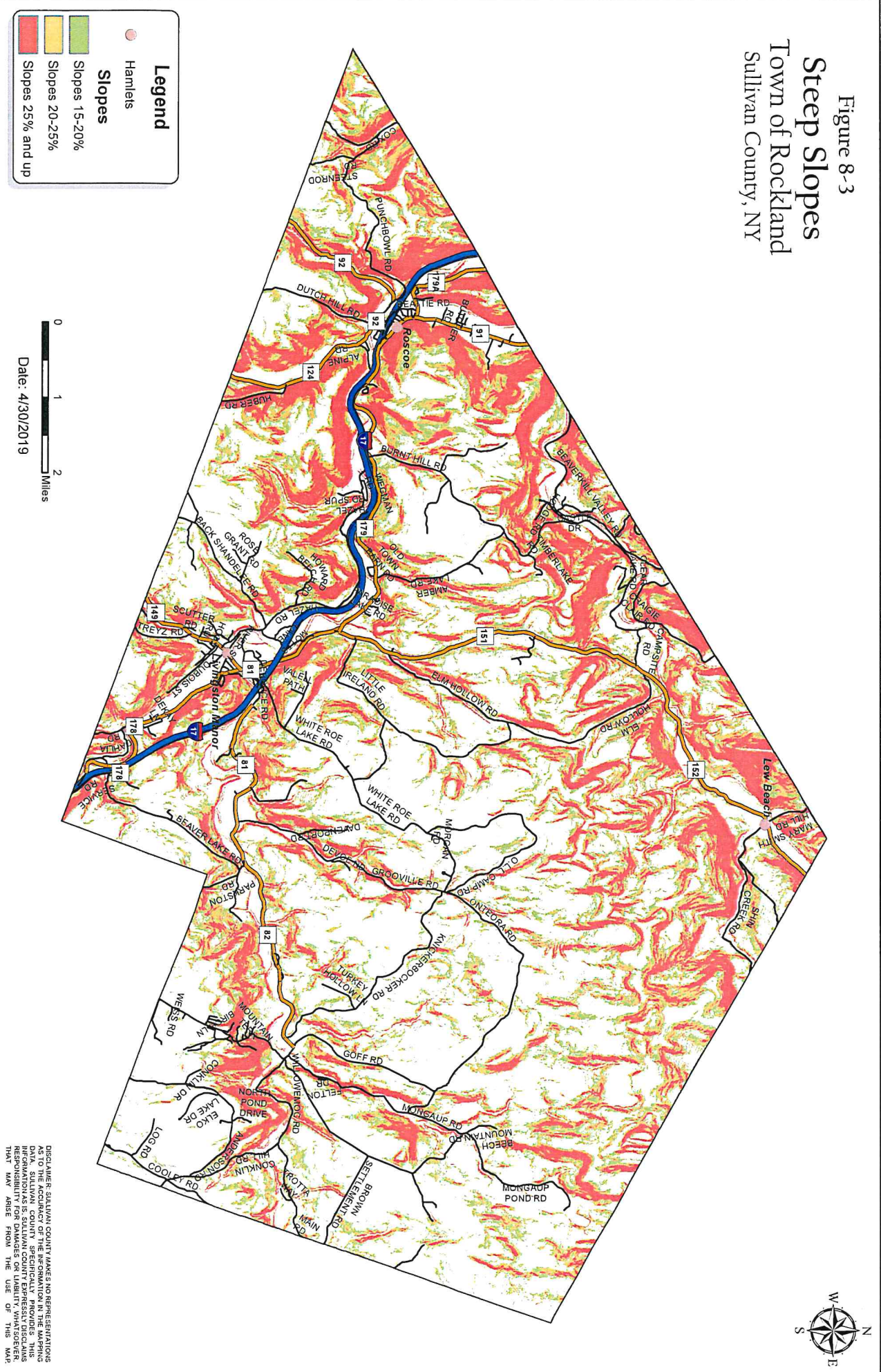


Figure 8-3
Steep Slopes
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ridges that define the character of the area. This bedrock has also been uplifted over the eons by tectonic forces and shaped by glaciers and erosion to produce the current mountainous landscape. It tends to yield good supplies of water, but it is often found near the surface, thereby limiting building development and agricultural potential. The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development describes area surface geology as follows:

"The majority of the surficial geology of the Catskills was determined during the last 1.6 million years. Four ice ages inundated this area, most recently the Wisconsin advance. The Wisconsin glaciers finished retreating from this area only approximately 14,000 years ago. The majority of the region is composed of glacial till. Till (material deposited by a glacier) is unstratified, unsorted, and is made up of a wide range of sizes. For this reason, glacial till generally acts as an aquifer, holding large amounts of groundwater. The high peak regions are entirely comprised of bedrock. These sandstone and conglomerate mountaintops were scoured and scraped by glaciers moving around and over their summits, leaving virtually no loose material."



Eatable wild ramps



Spike horn buck

8.2.7 Wildlife

The extensive range of habitats in the Town provides for a remarkable variety in the types of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. These habitats include contiguous woodlands, open fields, stream corridors, and interspersed human settlement. The nearly 15,000-acre Willowemoc Wild Forest, the majority of which is in Rockland, is managed by NYSDEC. As such, the DEC must prepare a unit management plan (UMP) to outline future guidelines and actions for these state resources. In 1991, the UMP was completed for the Willowemoc – Long Pond Wild Forest. Although the plan also covers some areas adjacent to the Town, the inventory component provides a good representation of the wildlife in the Town.

Wildlife contributes to the enjoyment of the Town for residents and visitors alike. Sightings of bald eagles and bear are fairly common, for example, while a glimpse of a bobcat or a snowshoe hare is a rarer occurrence. Both casual and seasoned birders revel in the diversity of species that can be found in the Town. Anglers appreciate the abundance of both wild and stocked species. Rockland is also renowned for its hunting, a sporting activity that has positive effects on the town's economy from lodging and restaurants to outfitters and taxidermists.

8.2.8 Flora

The richness and diversity of plant life in the Catskills is well represented in the Town. Large expanses of undeveloped land enable study and appreciation of Rockland's vegetative cover at the local and regional levels. The complexity of the topic being well beyond the scope of this summary, the reader is encouraged to explore other resources, including *The Catskill Forest: A History*, by Michael Kudish.¹ Although this study covers only the northern portions of the Town, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the region's forested lands, including forest evolution and succession, human impact—agriculture, industry, and recreation. One chapter is devoted to the Beaverkill Range.

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8.3 Recommendations

Several of the recommendations of this section have important connections with those in Section 12 – Land Use.

Strategy 1 Take proactive steps to protect and sustain environmental resources.

- Action 1.1 *Work with Sullivan County to explore conducting a natural/environmental resource asset inventory that would focus on the Town and one or more neighboring municipalities.* Such a study with accompanying maps would, in part, help to guide the Town's future land use changes as well as assist in habitat protection and identifying areas that are more, or less, suitable for development. Some tools to assist in this endeavor are NYS' Environmental Resource Mapper, Floodplain Maps, Soil Surveys. Sullivan County GIS personnel could also assist in creating relevant maps. Grant programs to help fund the project should be explored with the county.
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Action 1.3 *Develop regulations to manage commercial water extraction enterprises in the Town.*

Action 1.4 *Explore the creation of a purchase of development rights program to help protect open lands and guide density toward developable areas. Recruit the assistance of professional experts to help determine options for implementation.*

Strategy 2 Encourage stream appreciation and protection.

Action 2.1 *Consider developing a stream enhancement program that protects, highlights and encourages use of the Town's streams while mitigating flooding problems and enhancing water quality.*

Action 2.2 *Seek to make available at town hall and other public locations educational guidance materials relating to stream stewardship and best streamside management practices. This material could come from sources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Council and would be targeted at property owners in general and home owners in particular.*

Action 2.3 *Continue to build awareness of the location of the floodplains in the Town.*

Strategy 3 Help ensure long-term quality of individual onsite septic systems.

Action 3.1 *Adopt a septic district maintenance law to require that septic systems are pumped and inspected on a periodic basis. This may involve the creation of a special district(s) to generate the resources to operate this environmental protection program.*

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Action 4.1 *Continue to improve stream corridor management to reduce the practical effects of flooding by removing obstacles to free stream flow without dredging.*

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Priority Action 4.4 *Develop building and infrastructure regulations for lands characterized by slopes.* Special attention should be given to prevent runoff and downstream flooding from any development on these lands. Consideration should be given to limiting or preventing construction on slopes over a certain percentage.

Strategy 5 Work to adopt measures to help ensure that new roadway design blends with the natural surroundings and will not adversely impact the environment.

- Action 5.1 *Require that new roads be designed to preserve natural topography and tree and ground cover, minimize cuts and fills and preserve important views and features.*
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SECTION 8 - ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

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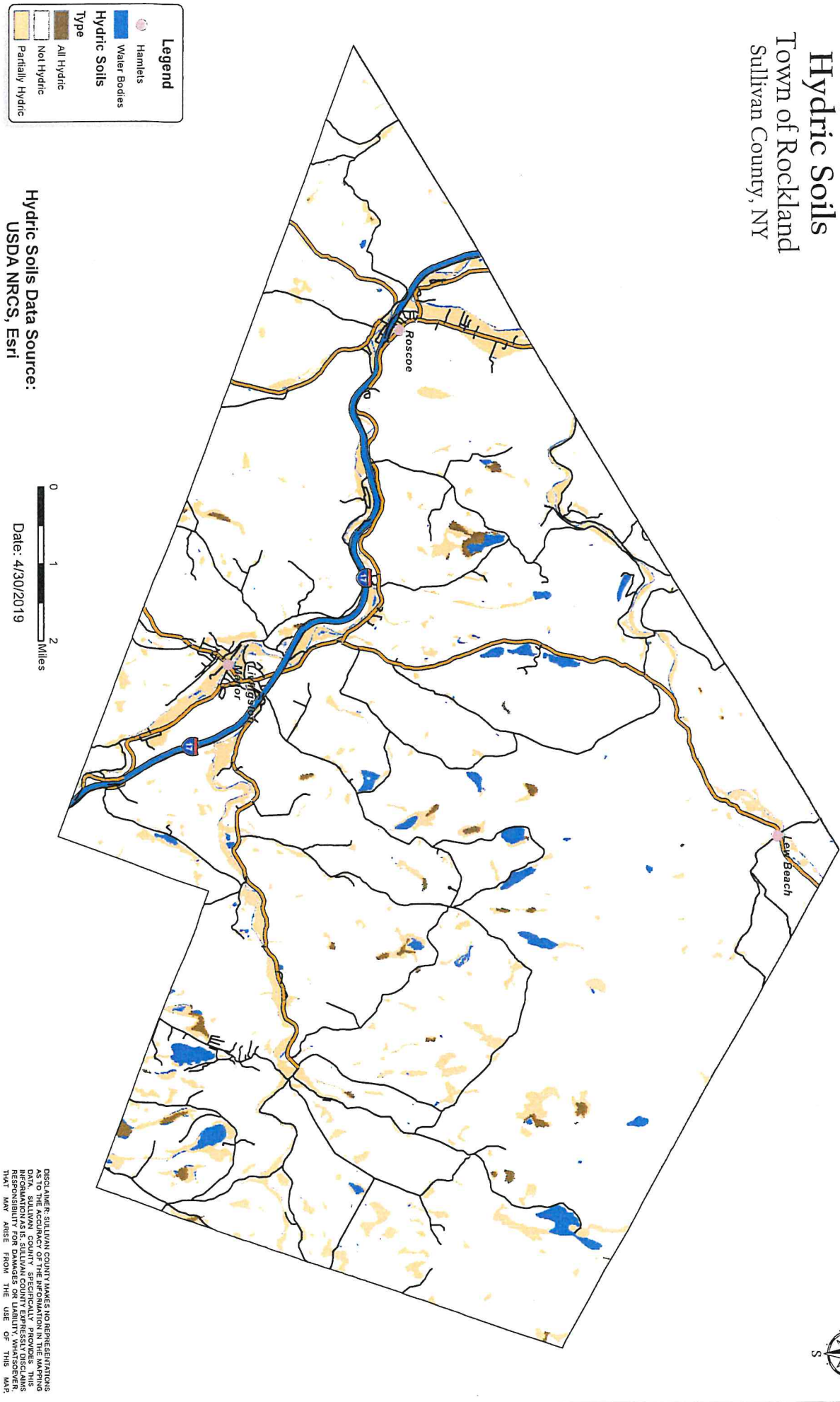
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SECTION 9 – TRANSPORTATION

9.1 Goals

- > To ensure that Rockland's transportation modes are safe, accessible and resilient.
- > To expand public transportation services to provide users with an affordable means of transit.
- > To improve wayfinding signage to attractions and centers throughout the Town.
- > To expand sidewalks and trails to connect communities and promote non-motorized transit.

"If you plan for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places." Cynthia Nikitin, Project for Public Space, speaking at the 2017 Sullivan Renaissance Conference.

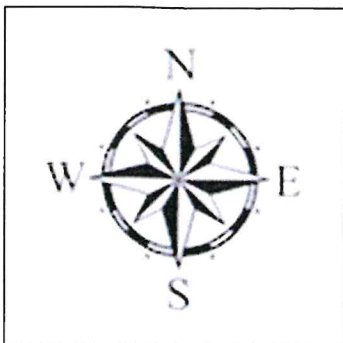
9.2 Summary of Existing Conditions

The efficient movement of people and goods is the primary purpose of all modes of transportation.

9.2.1 Transportation network

Historically, Rockland's transportation network was built around dirt roads and the railroad. Over time, railroads declined and horse-drawn vehicles disappeared as these modes of transportation were marginalized or replaced with the advent of airplanes and motor vehicles. As a result, most dirt roads were paved and new larger capacity roads were constructed.

In 2018, transportation in Rockland primarily consists of its road network (see Figure 9-1, Transportation Network). This network is anchored by Route 17 (future I-86), a four-lane highway which bisects the Town in an east-west direction. Route 17 works in concert with a system of county and Town roads to efficiently facilitate the movement of people and goods locally, regionally and nation-wide.



Route 17 (future I-86)



With Route 17 at its core, Rockland's roadway network provides fast and easy access to major metropolitan centers, interstate highways and airports, all of which accommodate the many tourists and 2nd homeowner's that travel to and from the Town. These same roads also provide an efficient outlet for goods produced in the Town to all points of the compass nationwide, and in particular to markets in the New York metropolitan area.

The Town's highway department maintains some 106 miles of town owned streets and roads. There are a number of county arterial roadways traversing the Town, such as Route 151 and Route 82, which are designed to enable travel between different areas of the community at moderate to high speeds. Generally, the major collector roads traversing the Town are rural roads connecting arterials and local roads at moderate speeds. Based on apparent traffic volumes experienced on these roads, arterials and major collectors are not experiencing problems associated with heavy traffic volumes nor are they expected to in the near future. The remaining roads in the Town may be classified as minor collectors and local roads. Minor collectors provide connections between local roads and arterials at slower speeds. Local roads (including privately owned roads) channel traffic to and from major collectors and arterials. Local roads are used to access properties and are generally not utilized by through traffic. With a few exceptions discussed below, the Town's minor collectors and local roads are generally operating below capacity.

9.2.2 Transportation amenities

As is the case in most rural communities, owner-operated motor vehicles are the primary mode of transportation in the Town. Less used modes of public transportation consist of local taxi service, local and regional bus service, and a location-based ride sharing application. There is also a private bus service which shuttles fly-fishing enthusiasts from New York City to the Town's world renowned trout streams. In addition, the Sullivan County International Airport provides regional air taxi service and can handle small general aviation aircraft as well as larger business jets. The Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) operates a freight service on tracks running along the western border of Sullivan County. NS currently has two freight accounts in the county to which it provides service via rail sidings. Currently there is no demand for a transload facility in the County according to the railroad.¹ While there are a number of



Coach USA



Sullivan County International Airport

¹ **Sidings** service freight customers located adjacent to the rail line. **Transload facilities** service customers that are not located next to the rail line, but instead bring freight to and from the facility by truck.

biking and hiking trails in the Town, they were developed as recreation opportunities rather than a means of transporting people to and from homes, schools, and the workplace.

9.2.3 Transportation issues

9.2.3.1 Traffic congestion & pedestrian safety

NY Route 17 (future I-86)

As previously discussed, Rockland is bisected by Route 17 which crosses the Town in an east-west direction. Route 17 enters Sullivan County near the Village of Bloomingburg and continues west through the county and on into adjoining Delaware County. Currently, that part of Route 17 which runs through the Town is operating below capacity. East of the Town, however, heavy weekend traffic during peak tourist months can occur on Route 17 starting at the Village of Monticello and continuing east through Orange County to its intersect with I-87 (NY Thruway) at Harriman. This seasonal traffic congestion can partly be attributed to the large number of NY metropolitan area tourists (including bungalow colony renters and 2nd homeowners) traveling to Sullivan County. This situation may soon be exacerbated by the recent opening of the Resorts World Catskills Casino and the Kartrite Resort & Indoor Water Park, both located in Monticello, and the 2020 scheduled opening of the Legoland amusement park in the Orange County town of Goshen. While Rockland's section of Route 17 should not experience near-term capacity issues, the efficient flow of tourists to and from the NY metropolitan area is of great importance to the Town's tourist oriented economy (see Section 6, Economic Development). Chronic capacity issues on Route 17 that impede traffic flow could depress the number of tourists visiting the area and thereby hurt the Town's economy.

Currently Route 17 is undergoing improvements as it transitions to I-86, however these are essentially an upgrading of the existing roadway which will not have a significant effect on its carrying capacity. In 2013, a State transportation study reviewed capacity issues along the 47 mile stretch of Route 17 between Harriman and Monticello and recommended the addition of a third lane in both directions along Route 17 from Harriman to Route 211 in the town of Wallkill. In 2019, the NYSDOT will undertake a study to determine priority projects along this corridor. Sullivan County, in conjunction with other groups and elected officials, is lobbying to extend this study and the planned third lane to the Monticello area. Both the Town of Rockland and Sullivan County have a special interest in participating in the DOT study as it unfolds.

Livingston Manor

In recent years, the hamlet has seen a marked increase in tourism which, in part, is being driven by millennials from New York City who have discovered the Town's outdoor recreational attractions, including its fly-fishing streams. With its historic atmosphere, unique specialty shops and eateries, the hamlet has become a popular destination for tourists. However, the resulting increase in vehicle and pedestrian traffic on Main Street is straining available public parking and creating potential safety issues caused by pedestrian jaywalking through vehicular traffic - primarily on the weekends. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of clearly marked crosswalks at the Main Street signaled intersection with Pearl Street.

While there are sidewalks along both sides of Main Street's business district, many side streets connecting residences to Main Street lack this amenity. In addition, there is no sidewalk connecting Main Street with Rotary Park, which park will be a trailhead for the future O&W rail trail. Adding sidewalks and clearly marked ADA compliant crosswalks over time would improve pedestrian safety and encourage residents to leave their vehicles at home and walk to hamlet parks and Downtown shopping.² An expanded sidewalk network would also benefit those hamlet residents who cannot afford a vehicle.

The Town is exploring ways to address these issues along with similar issues in Roscoe discussed below. This will include a review of design elements under the NYSDOT's Complete Streets program (<https://www.dot.gov/programs/completestreets>). Vehicle parking issues in both hamlets are discussed in Section 5, Commercial Areas.



Unmarked intersection crosswalks (Main Street, Livingston Manor)



Clearly marked crosswalk (Hemlock Ridge, Livingston Manor)

Roscoe

Like Livingston Manor, Roscoe has also experienced an increase in tourist related vehicular and pedestrian traffic and an occasional shortage of public parking can occur on weekends during the tourist season. The existing sidewalk network is mostly limited to the commercial businesses on Stewart Avenue. In order to get to other popular attractions, such as the Prohibition Distillery on Union Street, pedestrians must walk in the street. ADA compliant crosswalks are also lacking. The Stewart Avenue intersect with Route 179 (Old Route 17) lacks clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks which is notable



Unmarked intersection crosswalks, no sidewalks
(Route 179 / Stewart Avenue intersect, Roscoe)



High crosswalk curbing is not wheelchair friendly
(Stewart Avenue, Roscoe)

² ADA is an acronym for the Americans With Disabilities Act.



Scenic agricultural landscape (hay field view from Route 152)

because public parking exists on the Route 179 side of this intersect. In addition, there are no sidewalks on either side of Route 179 which connect the parking areas to Stewart Avenue. Pedestrians are therefore forced to walk on the edge of Route 179 in order to reach Stewart Avenue sidewalks. Adding sidewalks and clearly marked ADA compliant crosswalks would improve pedestrian safety and encourage hamlet residents to leave their vehicles at home and walk to Downtown destinations. An expanded sidewalk network would also benefit those residents who cannot afford a vehicle.

Rural Roads

There is an increasing number of vehicles on Grooville Road, White Roe Lake Road, and Knickerbocker Road due to traffic from seasonal camps. The Town should monitor this situation for potential vehicle and pedestrian safety issues that may need to be addressed either now or in the future.

9.2.3.2 Scenic roadway views

There are opportunities throughout the Town to recognize the unique character of scenic roads and seek to preserve them as viewshed corridors. In addition to their transportation function, scenic roads establish the Town's overall rural beauty so beloved by its residents and tourists alike. Methods to preserve scenic roadway viewsheds, including views of scenic working farms, could be considered in order to assure their continued visual significance. While some viewsheds may be protected by designated parkland or conservation easements, others may be located in areas subject to change (see Section 3, Figure 3-3, Protected Open Space). In these latter cases, the implementation of development techniques may suffice to preserve visual attributes. Still others may require conservation easements or even outright purchase.



Scenic view (Route 151)



Scenic view (Camp Site Road)

The Town should identify important roadway viewsheds and determine if existing zoning regulations support their continued integrity. Attention would be given to viewsheds that transition between two zoning districts to assure that visual continuity is maintained.

9.2.3.3 Roadway flooding

Many of Rockland's roads and streams are closely nestled together at the base of its many steep-sloped mountains. As a result, periodic flooding during heavy rain events occurs on Downtown streets in Livingston Manor and Roscoe and on Craigie Clair Road, Tuttle Hill Road and Beaverkill Valley Road. There are a few other roads such as Grooville Road and Covered Bridge Road that are subject to flooding during less frequent extreme weather events such as Hurricane Irene. The Town is currently working with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers to mitigate flooding in Livingston Manor. The Town and Sullivan County are coordinating efforts to mitigate flooding in Roscoe. Hamlet flooding is also discussed in Section 5, Commercial Areas.

9.2.3.4 Public transit gaps

The combination of a low year-round population, a high percentage of vehicle ownership and a seasonal tourist population has likely caused a gap in public transportation for some low-income residents who could benefit from this service. While there are support services in Sullivan County to transport people to and from social benefit agencies and medical facilities, there is a gap in affordable transit services to take people to and from work. In this situation, the price of a job becomes a car or a cab which some low-income people cannot afford. Nearly 10% of Sullivan County households do not have a car according to a 2015 county transportation study and a number of those households are in Livingston Manor and Roscoe.³ While there is bus service in both hamlets, the buses only run two scheduled trips per day which is not enough to support shift work at say Walmart or the new casino, both located in nearby Monticello. Lacking a convenient and affordable means to get to work can cause people and families to become trapped in poverty and all the social and health issues associated with it. This same problem applies not only to getting to work, but to shopping and post-secondary education classes as well. The county study recognizes this issue and starts a dialog on ways to address it. The Town should join in this discussion.

9.2.3.5 Wayfinding signage

Wayfinding signage to attractions and centers could be improved in a number of places throughout the Town. For example, the westerly exit 96 ramp from Route 17 to Livingston Manor is lined with attraction signs that are too small and poorly placed to read, while there is a hodgepodge of signage at the ramp's intersect with Route 81 (DeBruce Road). In addition, underutilized roadside kiosks can lack useful, up-to-date information. Some beneficial signage is difficult to see, such as a hamlet of Roscoe sign on Route 206 that is partially blocked by foliage. The Town should conduct an audit of existing signage and identify places in need of new or improved signage. The development of a wayfinding mobile phone

³ 2015 Sullivan County Coordinated Transportation Services Plan.



Cluttered signage (Route 17 exit ramp intersect with Route 81)



Underutilized State roadside kiosk (Route 81)

application would be of further benefit to visitors. As more tourists come to the area, clearly marked, well maintained signage, both physical and mobile phone based, is important to guide people to attractions and centers of interest. See also Section 5, Commercial Areas for further discussion of signage improvements.

9.3 Recommendations

Strategy 1 Coordinate with governmental agencies and elected officials as Route 17 transitions to I-86 and seek mitigate traffic congestion.

Priority Action 1.1 *Coordinate with efforts by Sullivan County and elected officials to add a third lane in both directions to Route 17 from its intersect with I-87 (NY Thruway) to exit 100 at Liberty.*

Action 1.2 *Work with the NYSDOT to preserve the Town's three existing Route 17 interchanges.*

Action 1.3 *Work with the NYSDOT to implement directional signage improvements (if needed) on Route 17.*

Strategy 2 Improve wayfinding signage to attractions and centers throughout the Town.

Action 2.1 *Conduct an audit of existing signage on all roads and streets in the Town and identify areas in need of new or improved signage.*

Action 2.2 *Work with appropriate governmental agencies to implement signage improvements on State and County roads.*

Priority Action 2.3 *Explore development of a mobile phone wayfinding application.* This could include maps of biking and hiking trails, fly-fishing streams and other cultural, historic and agritourism attractions and centers of interest.

- Action 2.4 *Identify governmental and private sector programs that offer funding opportunities for improved roadway signage, including software development of a mobile phone wayfinding application.*

Strategy 3 Seek to preserve scenic roadway viewsheds in the Town.

- Action 3.1 *Conduct a visual audit to identify unprotected scenic roadway viewsheds. This action will provide a list of scenic vistas for which options can be identified to preserve them.*
- Action 3.2 *Review and improve (if necessary) zoning and land use ordinances for viewshed protection. This may include establishment of viewshed corridors as tools to protect scenic views. It could also include establishment of strict off-premise signage controls and even banning billboards and other signage that block scenic viewsheds.³*
- Action 3.3 *Explore the establishment of design ordinances that place limits on development impacts to scenic viewsheds. Controls on things like height, bulk, design, color landscaping, density, vegetation, grading, and ridgeline development can better blend a project with its surroundings.*
- Action 3.4 *Explore the establishment of rural roadway design standards. Such standards could take into account things like topography, preservation of existing vegetation, minimal street lighting and traffic calming measures.*
- Action 3.5 *Encourage Sullivan County to consider an open space bond issue to fund purchases of scenic easements.*

Strategy 4 Work to mitigate flooding on Town roads and streets.

- Priority Action 4.1 *Continue to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to mitigate flooding in downtown Livingston Manor.*
- Action 4.2 *Continue to coordinate with Sullivan County to mitigate flooding in downtown Roscoe if it reoccurs.*
- Action 4.3 *Identify Town roads and streets that are subject to periodic flooding and explore ways to mitigate future flood events. Predicted climate change scenarios in New York State include an increase in the number and intensity of heavy precipitation events.*

³ "An off-premise sign is a sign displaying advertising copy that pertains to a business, person, organization, activity, event, place, service or product not principally manufactured or sold on the premises on which the sign is located." Texas Department of Transportation, 2013.

- Action 4.4 *Review designs for new public and private roads for appropriate flood resiliency measures.*

Strategy 5 Work to address gaps in public transportation.

- Action 5.1 *Coordinate with Sullivan County as it implements public transportation recommendations in the 2015 "Sullivan County Coordinated Transportation Plan."*
- Action 5.2 *Encourage Sullivan County to expand its public bus service to include routes in the Town.*

Strategy 6 Coordinate with State and County agencies as they implement local and regional traffic plans.

- Action 6.1 *Coordinate with Sullivan County as it implements transportation recommendations in its comprehensive plan.*
- Action 6.2 *Coordinate with Sullivan County and elected officials regarding Town participation in the upcoming 2019 NYSDOT study to address congestion issues on Route 17 (future I-86). The study will, in part, review the addition of a third lane in both directions from its I-87 (Thruway) intersect to Route 211 in the Town of Wallkill and perhaps to Liberty.*

Strategy 7 Improve Town roadway design specifications.

- Action 7.1 *Continue to periodically review and update (if necessary) Town specifications for new road construction. See also actions 3.4 and 4.3 above.*
- Action 7.2 *Evaluate the use of private roads as a mechanism for access to residential subdivisions. Private roads are a tool to allow development of residential subdivisions without placing the burden of roadway maintenance on the Town.*
- Action 7.3 *Work to minimize curb cuts along Town roads. Develop access management standards such as shared driveways for adjacent uses in order to reduce points of access on roads in the Town. As development occurs, access drives are created and each new access point creates a potential for traffic conflict.*
- Action 7.4 *Evaluate rural roads for the need to incorporate NYSDOT Complete Streets elements.*

- Action 7.5 *Continue to document vehicle accidents in order to identify any accident-prone roadways and intersections that may need improvement.*

Strategy 8 Improve and expand sidewalk networks over time in Livingston Manor and Roscoe.

Priority Action 8.1 *Conduct a visual audit of existing sidewalks and crosswalks and identify any needed repairs and improvements.*

- Action 8.2 *Explore NYSDOT Complete Streets elements for ways to improve pedestrian issues such as jaywalking. For example, if there is a long distance between signalized intersections in commercial districts, consider adding a mid-block crossing with crosswalk signage directing motorists to stop for pedestrians.*

- Action 8.3 *Work to assure that all new and existing pedestrian crosswalks are clearly marked and ADA compliant.*

- Action 8.4 *Work to add sidewalks over time to hamlet streets and link them to the Downtown sidewalk networks. This would improve pedestrian safety and encourage people to walk to Downtown business centers.*

Strategy 9 Seek to incorporate trails, bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways into the Town's transit network.

- Action 9.1 *Identify roadways, streets and abandoned railroad beds that may be appropriate for the addition of trails, bicycle lanes and pedestrian sidewalks.*

- Action 9.2 *When Town roads and streets are repaved or resurfaced, consider adding accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists such as sidewalks, bike lanes or widened shoulders. Coordinate with Sullivan County to consider adding the same amenities to county roads that traverse the Town*

- Action 9.3 *Continue to pursue construction of the Riverwalk Trail project in Livingston Manor. Along with its recreational opportunities, the project would provide a pedestrian-friendly walkway to access commercial businesses on Main Street (see also a discussion of the Riverwalk Trail in Section 5, Commercial Areas).*

Priority Action 9.4 *Evaluate the need for pedestrian safety measures for streets and sidewalks leading to the Round Top trailhead in Livingston Manor.*

- Action 9.5 *Explore adding a shared pedestrian/bicycle lane on Pleasant Street running from the Livingston Manor business center to Rotary Park. This would enable*

cyclists and walkers using the proposed O&W rail trail to safely access the Downtown business district. Bicycle lock stations could be located at the park and at locations in the Downtown district.

Action 9.6 *Promote connectivity between residential developments.* Residential developments, especially cul-de-sacs, can become dead ends with one way in and out. Multiple ways should be explored to connect subdivisions to local destinations and to other subdivisions. For example, the Hemlock Ridge residential development has two points of vehicle ingress and egress, one of which connects the development's sidewalks with Livingston Manor's Downtown sidewalk network.

Action 9.7 *Promote interconnection opportunities between trails, parks and pedestrian walkways with the rest of Town's transit network.*

Action 9.8 *Coordinate with adjacent municipalities on bicycle and pedestrian transit opportunities that may cross mutual borders.*

Strategy 10 Monitor advances in vehicle technology against infrastructure needs they may require.

Action 10.1 *Encourage additional EV charging stations in the Town as needed.* Currently there are EV charging stations located at the Roscoe Diner and Roscoe Beer Co. in Roscoe and at the Catskill Brewery in Livingston Manor. If electric vehicles become more common place, there may be a need for additional charging stations at these and other locations to accommodate the people that drive them.

SECTION 10 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

10.1 Goals

- > To maintain a land use pattern that accommodates orderly business growth while preserving the Town's natural beauty and rural character.
- > To promote year-round tourism to enhance the economy.
- > To promote a diversified economy.
- > To invest in public improvements necessary to attract and retain businesses.

10.2 Summary of Existing Conditions

In 2018, the business atmosphere in Sullivan County is generally upbeat with the opening of the \$1.3 billion Resorts World Catskills Casino and the Kartrite Resort & Indoor Water Park along with a surge in recreational tourism. Unemployment in Sullivan County is 3.8% – a ten year low, and housing sales are up.¹ Rockland's business community, which consists mainly of small owner-operated enterprises, shares this enthusiasm as they have seen an increasing number of tourists visiting the Town and spending money. It is interesting to note that a number of businesses are owned by individuals who hail from other regions of the nation – having once been visiting tourists themselves. Interest in opening a business in Rockland has also increased as reflected in its relatively new breweries, distillery, lodging, wine & spirits shop and others. With this increase in economic activity, now is an opportune time for the Town to take stock of its economic development strengths and challenges and plan for its economic future.

10.3 Strengths and challenges

Rockland has many strengths for economic development including location, transportation, a trained labor force, infrastructure, business incentive programs and quality of life resources. However, in 2018, the



Roscoe Lumber Yards



Prohibition Distillery

¹ Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Unemployment Rate in Sullivan County, NY, October 2018.

Axelrod, Daniel. "Residential real-estate market booming throughout the region." Times Herald-Record, July 28, 2018.

Town is facing challenges from stiff regional competition for business attraction, online shopping and the high cost of living and doing business in New York State. Within this context the Town must continue to take a focused and proactive approach to economic development.

10.3.1 Strengths

Strengths are the resources that strengthen the economic base and positively contribute to business operations. These resources may include the local labor force, location, incentive programs that make doing business desirable, and quality of life resources. Strengths foster economic development and retain and expand business.

Location. Approximately 60 million people live within a five-hours drive from Rockland and 20 million of them are within a two hours drive in the New York metropolitan area. The Town is the western gateway to the state's Catskill Park and is traversed by world-class trout streams. Rural beauty and proximity to urban areas make the Town an attractive place in which to live, start a business and telework.

Transportation Network. Rockland's excellent roadway system, with Route 17 (future I-86) at its core, provides fast and convenient access to major metropolitan centers, interstate highways and airports. The roadways facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods both regionally and nation-wide. In particular, NY metropolitan area markets, which generated an estimated GDP of \$1.72 trillion in 2017, are within a two hours drive of the Town.² Regional motor freight services offer LTL (less-than-truck-load) and truck load freight service. NY Stewart International Airport is 1.5 hours away and offers air cargo service and international flights.

Travel times:

- New York City – 2 hours drive
- Boston, MA – 4.5 hours drive
- Hartford, CT – 3 hours drive
- City of Binghamton – 1 hour drive
- City of Middletown – 1 hour drive
- Route 17 intersect with I-84 in Orange County – 1 hour drive
- Sullivan County International Airport – 30 minutes drive
- Greater Binghamton Airport – 1.5 hours drive
- NY Stewart International Airport – 1.5 hours drive
- Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey – 2 hours drive

Skilled workforce. Town residents comprise an experienced and educated labor force. A large portion of the labor force is employed by professional industries, with education, healthcare and social services being the largest segment in that group (see Appendix A, Table 13). Some 90% of the Town's labor force is employed at job locations within Sullivan County, while a lesser number of workers commute to job locations outside the County (Appendix A, Figure 5). A skilled labor force is as important to business attraction as are incentive programs.

² "GDP of the New York metro area from 2001 to 2017." Statistica.com.

Water and sewer service. Municipal water and sewer service is available in the commercial zones of Roscoe and Livingston Manor (see Figure 3-4, Zoning Map, and figures 6-3, Livingston Manor Sewer & Water Districts and 6-4, Roscoe Sewer & Water Districts). The availability of municipal water and sewer service is a valuable asset to business attraction.

Business incentive programs. Numerous federal, state and county incentive programs are available to the business community. While it is not the purpose of this Plan to list each program, two county examples of note are (a) the Sullivan County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) which offers financial assistance to qualifying businesses in the form of tax incentives and tax abatement opportunities, and (b) The Sullivan County Revolving Loan Fund which provides low-interest loans to help businesses, including agribusinesses, get started and expand in the county.

Quality of Life. Rockland's high quality of life is grounded in a strong sense of community, attractive rural character, excellent school districts, vibrant hamlets, cultural events, and exceptional recreational opportunities. All of these attributes make Rockland an attractive place to live, work and locate a business.

10.3.2 Challenges

Challenges are negative factors that provide obstacles or stumbling blocks to economic development, and detract from business retention and expansion.

Cyclical economy. The effects of the economic recessionary period of 2008-2012 have largely disappeared in the Hudson Valley and this is reflected in increased economic activity. Corporate spending within the U.S. is up as is consumer spending. Bank lending has increased and unemployment rates are at low levels, though many new jobs often pay less than pre-recession jobs. All of this has been good news for Rockland's tourist-based economy which is very much tied to the economy's cyclical highs and lows. However, lurking underneath this robust economy are rising debt levels that could put the brakes on it. In particular, US household debt at over \$13 trillion exceeds the 2008 pre-recession peak by some \$837 billion and total global debt is estimated at \$247 trillion – 2.5 times the size of the global economy.³ While too-easy credit brought on the last recession, high debt levels could bring on the next one.

Stiff Competition. Competition for business attraction and retention primarily comes from the New York City area, northern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, as well as the Hudson Valley region up to and including the Albany area. All of these competing regions offer attractive business incentive programs and some have less burdensome tax and/or regulatory structures compared to New York State.

High cost of doing business in New York State. For over 200 years, New York State was the nation's center of capitalism, prosperity, ingenuity and opportunity. However, over the past forty years the state's role as an economic engine has faltered. The cause is largely rooted in New York State's tax structure,

³ Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Center for Microeconomic Data. [Household Debt Registers Faster in Q3 2018](#).
Institute of International Finance. [Global Debt Monitor – July 2018](#).
International Monetary Fund. [World Economic Outlook \(April 2018\)](#).

and multiple layers of government and regulatory requirements all of which can be impediments to economic development. The State has one of the highest overall tax rates in the nation according to the Tax Foundation; the State's municipal "home rule" structure gives local municipalities authority over various land use approvals which can cause delays, and projects may require review from county and state agencies which can add further delays. If a project is determined to be a Type 1 action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, the project sponsor may need to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement which can add considerable time and cost to a project's pre-development costs.

High cost of living in New York State. New York's high cost of living is causing many of its working age residents to flee the state to less expensive areas of the country.⁴ Between 2017 and 2018, the state had the highest out-migration rate of any state in the nation for the third year in a row.⁵ Where the workers go businesses will follow.

Lack of shovel-ready building sites. While this issue primarily affects projects involving more than five acres, it can affect smaller ones as well. Currently there is a shortage of shovel-ready building sites in Sullivan County and there are none in Rockland, yet shovel ready sites can play an important role in attracting economic growth.⁶ This poses a challenge to attracting new corporate businesses, many of which want to be operational within one year. However, navigating the regulatory approval process can take a year or longer, especially if an Environmental Impact Statement is required. Fully engineered sites with municipal approval are important to attracting companies interested in doing business in Sullivan County. The Town and County are currently at a disadvantage with competitor regions that have a varied selection of shovel-ready sites.

High Infrastructure costs. The high cost of infrastructure improvements can be an impediment to economic growth. The Town currently benefits from a well maintained infrastructure base which includes municipal water and sewer service in most of its commercial zones. In particular, wastewater facilities serving the Roscoe and Livingston Manor downtown business zones are currently in the midst of significant upgrades which will allow them to operate well into the future. However, the cost to expand water and sewer service to unserved areas of the Town's commercial zones could be a disincentive to attracting new businesses, especially those projects with high volume water and sewer requirements.

Broadband service gaps. Currently broadband service gaps exist in certain rural parts of the Town which is a major deterrent to economic growth in those areas. Tourists, including second home owners, home-based businesses, teleworkers, farmers and year-round residents all require internet service.

National and Global competition. Even rural communities such as Rockland are competing in the global economy. On the one hand, the Town successfully competes as a world-wide recreational tourist

⁴ Quinnipiac University / Poll. 35% of New Yorkers expect to move for a better life, March 20, 2019.

Campanile, Carl and Max Jaeger. "41% in city can't afford life in state: poll," *New York Post*, March 21, 2019.

⁵ Westchester County Business Journal. *New York ranks first in population loss (again)*, January 4, 2019.

⁶ Walsh, James. "Real estate summit explores county's strengths, challenges." *Times Herald-Record*, May 22, 2015.

attraction. In particular, its world-class fly-fishing streams attract fishing enthusiasts from all over the world. On the other hand, the Town would seem to be a logical location for manufacturers of fishing equipment. At a minimum, one might expect to find a small, boutique manufacturer of fishing flies. Unfortunately cheap overseas labor coupled with the high cost of doing business in the state causes companies to manufacture this equipment elsewhere. Many fishing flies are imported from Africa.

Online shopping. In addition to competing with large-scale malls, many small-business owners are also competing with online shopping. Many people today – working long hours and sometimes two jobs – have less time to do things like shop at small stores or even at large malls and supermarkets. Still other folks prefer use their free time for other activities rather than shopping at a box store. The convenience and time saving advantage of shopping at online sites – which often offer lower prices than box stores – represents a challenge to a number of Rockland’s small businesses.

10.4 Planning for future economic development

While it is recognized that some elements which attract business investment, like market forces and capital availability, are out of the Town’s control, it is also recognized that there are many things the Town *can* do to promote a positive business environment.

10.4.1 *Maintain a land use plan that accommodates growth while preserving the Town’s natural beauty, rural character and historic heritage.*

The pristine natural beauty of Rockland’s forests, streams and lakes; its exceptional recreational opportunities; its open space and attractive hamlets are critical assets to its success as a tourist and second home destination. As discussed below, tourism represents a large component of the Town’s economy, so protecting these natural assets is vital to a successful economic future. The Town should periodically review its zoning districts and Zoning Law with an eye toward guiding growth in ways that protect and enhance these assets from which future generations can enjoy and prosper.

10.4.2 *Enhance year-round tourism.*

Rockland’s economy is largely driven by tourism including second-home owners which fall into the tourism category. The Town’s rural natural beauty, attractive hamlets and exceptional recreational opportunities, including world-class fishing streams, attract tourists from around the nation and the world. In 2016, the total state-wide economic impact of tourism was 104.8 billion which generated 914,000 tourism jobs and 8.2 billion in state and local taxes.⁷ In 2016, tourism was up some 8% over the previous year in Sullivan County and it realized \$419 million from tourism spending of which \$140 million was generated by second homes.⁸ The annual economic impact from sport fishing alone in Sullivan County is

⁷ New York State Office of the Governor. Governor Cuomo Announces Economic Impact of Tourism Achieves Historic \$104.8 billion, May 11, 2017.

⁸ Tourism Economics. “The Economic Impact of Tourism in New York: 2016 Calendar Year Catskill Focus.” Oxford Economics Ltd. Abraham, Joseph. “Tourism sparks the economy to the tune of \$419 million in 2016.” Sullivan County Democrat, March 2018.



Small business shops, Livingston Manor

estimated at \$12 million.⁹ Some 15.5% of all labor income in the County comes from tourism.¹⁰

Currently most tourism activity, including second homeowners, occurs during the warm months of spring, summer and early fall and then declines during the winter. That leaves many tourist dependent businesses with several lean months to contend with. The drop in economic activity seems to coincide with a drop in media and marketing exposure despite the fact that the area offers exceptional winter recreation opportunities in the form of snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snow biking, ice fishing, snowboarding, etc. For example, NYC millennials looking for a break from the digital world are discovering the peaceful attractions of ice fishing just as they have with warm weather fly fishing. When the O&W rail trail is operational it will present some excellent cross-country skiing, snow biking and snowshoeing opportunities. The Town could work with the Sullivan County Visitors Association and the local chambers of commerce to promote the area as a year-round tourist destination, and not just for outdoor recreation but for quaint lodging, cultural arts, and eco-tourism. Development of a social media based presence that touts year-round tourist attractions could benefit the Town.

10.4.3 *Diversify the economy to make it more resilient.*

With Rockland's economy largely built around tourism, this reliance on one industry comes with risks such as the cyclical ups and downs of the economy and the ever evolving nature of the tourism industry. Tourism is a discretionary expenditure and, as such, it tends to be something people cut back on when economic times are tough. And while tourists are once again flocking to the area, what happens if Sullivan County's many tourist attractions fall out of favor as they did once before in the 1970s? When the resort industry died in the 1970s, the County was mired for several decades in a recession with high unemployment. Broadening the Town's economic base would help make it more resilient to economic downturns and/or to the loss of any one industry. For example, agribusiness, which includes agricultural production, support services and value-added processing (i.e., breweries that turn hops into beer), is an economic sector that is well positioned to expand in the Town (see Section 11, Agriculture). The trend

⁹ Beam, Andrew. "A cold start to trout fishing season." *Times Herald-Record*, April 2, 2015.

¹⁰ Tourism Economics (see footnote 8).

towards remote office (RO) work (i.e., telework) is another area that could benefit the Town. Made possible by high speed broadband, more companies and workers are embracing the flexible work style offered by RO. In 2015, roughly 23% of employees reported some work done remotely and by 2020 RO workers may account for up to 50% of the workforce with educated millennial and Gen Z workers leading the way.¹¹ RO workers in the NY metropolitan area would find Rockland's far lower cost of living, high quality of life and proximity to NYC an ideal place to relocate. Attracting RO workers to live in the Town would provide a year-round boost to the local economy and help to stem recent declines in population. The Town should assess its stock of rental housing as many RO workers prefer to rent (see also Section 4, Residential Areas).

10.4.4 Invest in public improvements necessary to attract and retain businesses.

Maintaining and improving infrastructure is critical to attracting and retaining businesses, and Rockland has infrastructure assets that businesses look for. Most Town lands zoned for intensive commercial use have available municipal water and sewer service. The Town has been diligent in maintaining its water and wastewater systems and is currently upgrading its two wastewater treatment facilities. Most businesses do not want the expense of developing and maintaining potable water and septic systems. For businesses with large water and wastewater demands, there is often little choice but to locate in a municipality where these services are available. The Town's roadway system is well maintained and its centers of commercial activity in Roscoe and Livingston Manor have quick access to Route 17 (future I-86). The Town should continue to invest in road maintenance and make sure that it keeps its three access interchanges to Route 17 as it transitions to I-86.

The quaint, historic beauty of downtown Roscoe and Livingston Manor are qualities that attract businesses and people to these hamlets. As discussed in Section 5, Commercial Areas, the Town should develop town-wide design guidelines for commercial structures and expand the sidewalk networks in the two hamlets. These steps would improve the attractiveness of both hamlets to businesses and visitors.

Broadband internet plays an integral role in 21st century economies and in the daily lives of most people young and old alike. Commercial lands in and around Roscoe and Livingston Manor have access to broadband service which is vital to attracting and retaining businesses. Fiber optic service may also be available in the near future in the Downtown areas of both hamlets. However, there are some rural gaps in town-wide broadband service which deters new residents, second home owners, commercial development, home-based businesses, and teleworkers from locating to these areas. The Comprehensive Plan Committee placed special emphasis on eliminating broadband service gaps in the Town and making broadband coverage available to every person and business regardless of location. Toward this end, the Town is working with state and local elected officials to achieve this goal and some locations without broadband service are now set to receive it. The Town is also exploring alternative means to provide internet service such as the NYC-Mesh system which operates independently from major carriers such as Spectrum and Verizon.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *American Time Use Survey—2017 Results*. June 28, 2018.

"By 2020, 50% of Workforce Will be Remote. Here's How." Sector Watch, MarketWatch. April 19, 2017.

10.5 Recommendations

Strategy 1 **Develop a list of strategic locations for development.**

- Action 1.1 *Develop an inventory of commercial sites available for development or redevelopment as a tool to facilitate business attraction and expansion. Each identified property should include detailed information such as parcel size, utility availability, building and/or land description, and distance to transportation modes.*
- Action 1.2 *Coordinate with property owners, realtors and the Sullivan County Partnership to maintain the above said inventory so it remains up-to-date. Real estate is a constantly changing resource so to be successful the inventory must be current.*
- Action 1.3 *Coordinate with the Sullivan County Partnership to showcase commercial and industrial properties available for development on the Partnership's website.*
- Action 1.4 *Establish a web portal for economic development on the Town's website and post the property inventory on the portal (see also Action 5.1 below). Also include other information relevant to business attraction and retention such as financial incentive programs.*
- Action 1.5 *Explore expanding the GB and NB zones to increase the inventory of commercial properties.*

Strategy 2 **Develop a target list of business sectors that would enhance and diversify Rockland's economy.**

- Action 2.1 *Identify types of businesses that would complement the Town's existing businesses and tourism infrastructure (including 2nd homeowners). These may include additional lodging, restaurants, garden center, bicycle sales and repair, refrigerated trucking for agricultural products and food processing and distribution.*
- Action 2.2 *Consult with Sullivan County and the Sullivan County Partnership to develop a list of target industries that would add diversity to the Town's economy. These could include software development, light manufacturing, corporate offices and agribusiness value-added processing.*
- Action 2.3 *Develop a target list of jobs that can be done by telecommuting. Rockland's high quality of life attractions, low cost of living and its proximity to New York City*

make it an ideal location for telecommuting jobs such as law, graphics, design, animation, ROBO (remote office/branch office), software development, distance research and learning, artists and interactive media. These types of jobs could add new full-time residents to the community and boost the Town's year-round economy. Target telecommuting job sectors via social media and other means to promote Rockland as an ideal place from which to live and telework.

- Action 2.4 *Support Sullivan County's initiatives to enhance and diversify the county's economy. Rockland residents could benefit from well-paying jobs located in other parts of the county as well as in the Town.*

Strategy 3 Seek to develop shovel-ready sites.

- Action 3.1 *Encourage property owners to ready their lands for business development by conducting a site analysis and environmental reviews leading to generic environmental approval.*
- Action 3.2 *Encourage property owners to apply for governmental funding initiatives targeted to develop shovel ready sites.*
- Action 3.3 *Encourage Sullivan County to develop shovel ready incentive programs.*

Strategy 4 Support efforts to streamline Permits and SEQRA

- Action 4.1 *Periodically review the Town's Zoning Law for ways to streamline the permit approval process without compromising essential reviews. Opportunities may exist to create more business-friendly regulations for small businesses, including home-based businesses and agribusinesses.*
- Action 4.2 *Encourage governmental efforts to develop meaningful procedures to streamline the effectiveness and predictability of actions subject to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). For example, the Environmental Assessment Short-Form under SEQR was revised by the state to help streamline the review process for some projects.*
- Action 4.3 *Review the Town's Zoning Law with a focus on identifying ways (if any) to simplify and expedite the commercial land use review process.*

Strategy 5 Promote the Town as a desirable place to locate a business.

- Action 5.1 *Utilize the Town's website to create a business portal by which to tout the Town's economic development strengths including quality of life assets. Include the property inventory discussed in strategy 1 above and showcase new*

businesses and successful, well established businesses in the Town. Include a link to the Sullivan County Partnership and Roscoe and Livingston Manor Chambers of Commerce

- Action 5.2 *Utilize relevant social media platforms to promote business attraction.* Social media has integrated into daily communications and the Town should use these platforms to promote its attributes as a desirable place to locate a business or from which to telework (see action 2.3 above). Target businesses identified in Strategy 2 above.

Strategy 6 Maintain and enhance the Town's transportation advantages.

- Action 6.1 *Monitor new development projects that could increase traffic flow on the Town's roadways.* Seek to implement appropriate measures to mitigate potential traffic congestion on these roads.

Priority Action 6.2 *Support governmental initiatives to mitigate traffic congestion on Route 17 between Liberty and its intersect with NY I-87 (Thruway).* Developers seeking to site a commercial operation such as a food processing hub or distribution center are concerned about the potential for traffic congestion that can impede business flow. Tourists and 2nd homeowners share the same concern.

- Action 6.3 *Maintain Town roads to facilitate traffic flow to and from business centers.* Local market-based businesses require well maintained roads for customer access while larger manufacturing businesses require ease of access to interstates.

- Action 6.4 *Identify any existing traffic bottlenecks and other traffic problems and seek to develop solutions for the same.*

- Action 6.5 *Encourage regional initiatives to improve transportation and distribution infrastructure which could benefit Sullivan County.* The state's proposed cargo distribution hub at NY Stewart International Airport and locating a transrail distribution hub in Orange County are two such projects that could benefit businesses in Sullivan County.

- Action 6.6 Support Sullivan County efforts to expand public transit services both in the private and governmental sectors.

Strategy 7 Explore expanding water and sewer service in commercial zones.

- Action 7.1 *Explore opportunities to expand municipal water and sewer service in the GB and NB commercial zones in Roscoe and Livingston Manor.* Some properties in

these zones do not have access to water and sewer service, while others have access to one of these services but not both.

- Action 7.2 *Identify governmental funding programs and private sector opportunities to finance any future expansion of municipal water and sewer service in the GB and NB commercial zones. It is not unusual for developers to contribute to costs associated with bringing water and sewer service to their properties.*

Strategy 8 Work to close broadband service gaps in the Town.

- Priority Action 8.1 *Continue to work with elected officials and governmental agencies to expand broadband service to all areas of the Town.*

- Priority Action 8.2 *Work to identify areas in the Town where mobile phone and/or broadband internet service are not available.* This would enable the Town to become a more effective advocate in working to provide mobile phone and broadband service to these areas.

- Action 8.3 *Continue to monitor alternative ways to provide broadband service to close service gaps. New or existing technologies may offer viable ways to close service gaps and/or offer better and less expensive internet service to all areas of the Town.*

- Action 8.4 *Explore federal, state and private sector programs designed to assist rural communities in closing local gaps in broadband internet service.*

Strategy 9 Partner with Sullivan County, the Sullivan County Partnership and the Roscoe and Livingston Manor chambers of commerce on initiatives to attract and retain businesses.

- Action 9.1 *Coordinate with Sullivan County as it implements recommended actions in its Economic Development: Sullivan 2020 Toolbox. The plan contains strategies which could benefit Rockland's business attraction and retention efforts.*

- Action 9.2 *Work with the Sullivan County Partnership on business attraction opportunities and marketing strategies. Focus on industries where there is an identified local need and/or locational advantage such as food processing, food distribution and on industries utilizing teleworkers.*

- Action 9.3 *Work with the Sullivan County Partnership on opportunities to target a small but growing number of companies seeking to 'reshore' foreign operations to the United States. One example is the high-end apparel industry which has made a significant move back to the U.S.*

Strategy 10 Promote small business attraction and retention.

Small businesses generate tax revenues and often account for a large portion of jobs in a given community. Small businesses are significant generators of jobs in Rockland.

- Action 10.1 *Support county-wide entrepreneurial programs that assist new and existing businesses with marketing, business plans, local regulations and funding opportunities.*
- Action 10.2 *Continue to support small-scale home occupations in the Town's residential zones.*
- Action 10.3 *Support shared office space for business start-ups and short-term and long-term businesses. Opportunities for shared space can lower operating costs and provide an additional source of income for businesses that own their buildings. For example, Willow & Brown, a retail store in Livingston Manor, shares space with the Sugar Blossoms floral shop.*
- Action 10.4 *Encourage new agribusiness ventures in the Town.*
- Action 10.5 *Explore creating a Town Local Development Corporation (LDC). LDC's can be used to support economic development efforts and other public purposes. LDC's have a wide variety of activities in their toolbox to foster the attraction or expansion of new and existing businesses, enhance employment opportunities, provide job training, acquire and sell real property, and other activities.*
- Action 10.6 *Explore the implementation of local incentives that would benefit new and existing businesses. For example, some communities offer property tax reductions for a period of time to commercial property owners who improve their buildings in specific ways such as façade improvements.*

Strategy 11 Promote agribusiness industries, including agricultural production, support services, and value-added processing.

Rockland recognizes the importance of agribusiness operations to the Town's economy. See also Section 11, Agriculture.

- Action 11.1 *Encourage and support Sullivan County as it implements recommended actions in its 2014 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The plan contains recommendations that could enhance agribusiness retention and development in the Town.*

- Action 11.2 *Encourage governmental and private sector financial initiatives that support young farmers.* For example, New York State offers the New Farmers Grant Fund and the Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Program to help young farmers get in the business and remain there. Many farm credit cooperatives have programs to help start-up farms secure working capital.

Strategy 12 Promote labor force education.

- Action 12.1 *Work to identify skills gaps in the local labor force and encourage development of training and education programs to fill them.* Promote this action with the Sullivan County Partnership and local and higher education institutions. For example Orange-Ulster BOCES has offered a commercial sewing class in response to the reshoring of the high-end clothing manufacturing industry (see Action 9.3 above).
- Action 12.2 *Encourage governmental and private sector initiatives to promote apprenticeship programs.* There are currently shortages of trained workers in areas such as construction trades, manufacturing trades, technology and healthcare. Many of these are well-paying trade jobs which do not require a college degree.

Strategy 13 Encourage the expansion of childcare providers in the Town.

- Action 13.1 *Work with Sullivan County on ways to increase the number of childcare providers in the county.* This service is critical to many working families. Currently, there is a shortage of childcare providers in the county and there are none in Rockland.

Strategy 14 Plan for the development of alternative energy systems that minimally impact adjacent land uses, properties, and the environment in each of the Town's zoning districts.

- Action 14.1 *Periodically review and revise (if necessary) existing Town regulations for solar photovoltaic energy systems.* For example, recent advances in solar energy storage will now allow on-site energy storage to be included with solar photovoltaic systems. The Town should review its existing solar energy regulations and revise them (if necessary) to factor in this advance.
- Action 14.2 *Periodically review and revise (if necessary) existing regulations for wind energy systems.*
- Action 14.3 *Monitor advances in energy technology and develop regulations for any such advances where appropriate.*