



TOWN OF DOVER MASTER PLAN

Stone Church
1 Merchant St
2 Feeney St
3 Summer St

Oniontown
ONIONTOWN RD

Dover Furnace

South Dover

Tenmile

Webatuck

Harlem Valley
Psychiatric Center

CHICKADEE RD

Crane Pond

Duck Pond

Depression Pond

Chestnut Ridge

Sharparoon Pond

Ore Pond

Lapp Pond

Pell Lake

Cooperstown

Bear Swamp

Ellis Pond

Lake Weil

Dogtail Corners

Old RTE 55

OLD RTE 55

CARLSON RD

WHEELER

COTTAGE AVE

WHEELER

WILKINSON

LEATHER

HOLTON

TOWN OF DOVER
DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK
TOWN MASTER PLAN

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Adopted by the Town of Dover Planning Board
September 21, 1993

This master plan was prepared by the Dutchess County Department of Planning through a community services contract with the Town of Dover under the direction of the Master Plan Committee. The plan is a statement of the Town's goals, planning principles and recommendations. The Dutchess County Department of Planning strongly supports implementation of this master plan.

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TOWN OF DOVER
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

APRIL 28, 1999

1. On page 107, delete the first full sentence on the page, and substitute the following new text:

(continuation of previous paragraph) Local governments can also prohibit mining in certain districts and may prohibit mining on a town-wide basis under appropriate circumstances.

Mining and quarrying have occurred in many locations throughout the Town, primarily in the valley bottom area. Many mines have not been effectively managed or reclaimed. The Town has recently received proposals to reclaim existing mining and quarrying operations with solid waste rather than clean fill materials. This new direction is worrisome to the Town Board as it seeks to protect the Town's special character as a scenic and rural community that is attractive to families, businesses, and clean industry. The prevalence of large-scale mining and quarrying operations is antithetical to maintaining and enhancing the special character that this Master Plan encourages. Residents of the Town have said in public meetings and written surveys that they would like to prevent new mining operations.

Dover's current zoning has since 1987 prohibited new mining operations except in the industrial zone. However, a number of mines have been approved by DEC in the past eleven years in residential zones. The Town Board has generally not enforced the zoning against those who proceeded in good faith in the belief that their operations were permitted.

Retaining the Town's attractive open spaces and rural character is a paramount objective of this Master Plan. Agriculture is a key ingredient in that character. Several agricultural operations supplement their farm income through small-scale soil mining operations. This is especially important in Dover, where farming is threatened by a variety of factors including competition from farms in areas where farms are less expensive to operate and where residential development is not as financially attractive as an alternative land use. Mining in appropriate locations can thus help to maintain the rural character of the community by enabling farms to stay in business and avoid conversion to suburban development. The Town needs to take appropriate measures to keep its farms economically viable and provide economic incentives for them to continue to operate. One way to do this is by allowing soil mining in locations where it can enhance the economic viability of agriculture without creating significant disturbance to residential neighbors.

The Town Board has considered a range of alternatives to deal with soil mining. Given the amount of mining that has already occurred and is still ongoing, and the sensitivity of the valley bottom aquifer system as documented in studies done by the Chazen Companies of Poughkeepsie, the Town Board has seriously considered prohibiting all new mines that require DEC permits throughout the Town of Dover. (Existing mines that were commenced legally are automatically "grandfathered" to the extent that they can continue their current permitted operations.)

The Town Board has also considered maintaining the current highly restrictive zoning, while "grandfathering" mines commenced under the incorrect assumption that they were permitted uses in fairness to the landowners who were operating in good faith. In order to maintain agriculture as a viable business, the Town Board has also considered adopting a "soil mining overlay district," which would allow new mines and expansion of existing mines within designated areas of farmland that are well-buffered from residential neighbors.

A combination of these approaches seems to be an appropriate strategy to allow mining to continue on a limited basis in order to help maintain Dover's agriculture base. This strategy would maintain Dover's highly restrictive zoning which limits mining to the industrial district by special permit, while partially "grandfathering" existing mines that were commenced illegally but in good faith since 1987, and allowing mining as a special permit use to enhance the economic viability of farms in a designated soil mining overlay district.

2. On page 110, insert after the paragraph carried over from the previous page, the following new text:

Solid waste management facilities are a form of industrial development that the Town does not wish to encourage. Such facilities in the Town have proven to be environmentally unsafe with catastrophic potential (such as the Polytech fire in January, 1996). Solid waste management facilities, existing and proposed, have engendered great controversy in Dover in recent years. Town residents have come to meetings in great numbers to express their disapproval of proposals for such facilities. Although the Town wishes to encourage appropriate forms of light industry, it has done its share of hosting the solid waste industry and does not want to attract additional solid waste management facilities.

Dover is the first town north of the area regulated by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for watershed protection. Stringent new watershed regulations recently adopted by DEP have put pressure on nearby communities to host facilities for the management, processing, and disposal of solid waste. The Town of Dover has become a target for proposals to build various types of waste management and disposal facilities, most of them regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

In recognition of this potential threat and as a result of public outcry over several of these

proposals, the Town Board enacted a six-month moratorium on the permitting of solid waste management facilities in the fall of 1997. The moratorium was extended in the spring of 1998. The purpose of the moratorium was to enable the Town Board to study the problem and consider alternative ways of dealing with the issues. Having considered a variety of alternatives the Town Board has reached the conclusion that the safest course for the Town is to prohibit all such facilities in the Town, with the exception of municipally owned and operated facilities that the Town can fully control.

The Town Board reached this conclusion because there are already a large number of solid waste facilities in the Town, which can continue as non-conforming uses. New facilities would add an increased traffic burden on the Route 22 corridor, an increased burden on municipal resources, more risk of emission of dust, vibration, and odor, as well as the risk of another catastrophic event and the costs associated with it. The Town Board has also found, in its research in the records of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, that the DEC does not have the funding or staff needed to properly monitor solid waste management facilities or enforce its regulations.

The Town of Dover has chosen to retain its character as a rural community, while encouraging responsible commercial and light industrial development. The Town already has more than its share of waste-handling uses, and such facilities pose an unacceptable threat to the public health, safety, and welfare (including quality of life concerns, overall community vision, and protection of property values). Although some of these facilities may be safe when properly constructed and operated, Dover has learned from first-hand experience (including a major fire) that it cannot count on proper operation to occur. Its citizens deserve to be protected from the risks of accidents and inadequate facility management.

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TOWN OF DOVER
PLANNING BOARD

RESOLUTION NO. 1 OF 1993

ADOPTION OF MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Town of Dover Planning Board has been participating in a long range planning program, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Dover Planning Board has participated in the preparation of a Master Plan which has been worked on for the past four years and is the result of the review of preliminary studies which have been prepared by the Town's planning consultants on various planning factors in the Town of Dover, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Dover Planning Board has conducted numerous public information meetings and many public hearings on the proposed Master Plan, and

WHEREAS, there has been widespread dissemination of information regarding the proposed Master Plan and the preliminary studies, including distribution of report copies to the various appointed and elected officials in the Town, the public, press and media, and

WHEREAS, all members of the public appearing at public hearings who wished to be heard were heard, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Dover Planning Board has determined that the adoption of the Master Plan will not have a significant effect on the environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the Town of Dover Planning Board hereby adopts the Master Plan, prepared by Dutchess County Planning and Development Department, dated May, 1993, to serve as a guide to future growth and development in the Town of Dover, and commends it to the use of Dutchess County and other regional planning agencies as the recommended local policy to be followed in the Town of Dover.

Dated: September 21, 1993

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Dover is a rural, primarily residential community located in the southeastern portion of Dutchess County. Approximately 7,778 residents live in a total area of 35,824 acres. Community identity is organized around two major hamlets, Dover Plains in northern Dover and Wingdale in the southern part of the Town. There are scattered industrial sites throughout the Town, especially extractive industries which take advantage of Dover's large resource of sand and gravel. The largest employer in town is the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center, which has been slated for closure by the New York State Office of Mental Health. A large percentage of the land in Dover remains in agricultural use, or is used as camps and hunt clubs. Much of the Town remains vacant, largely due to such environmental constraints as shallow soils, steep slopes, poor permeability or wetlands.

Dover is on the northern edge of the advancing suburban development that has enveloped the southern New York counties and is pushing up through Putnam County along Route 22. Dover's neighbors to the south, Beekman and Pawling, have been under more intense development pressure from large proposals in recent years, while neighbors to the north and west, Amenia, Washington and Union Vale, have experienced less development pressure.

Migration into the county over the last twenty years has been fueled by a strong economy, relatively low unemployment levels, and proximity to the New York metropolitan area. Substantially higher housing and land prices in and around New York City and Westchester County are forcing families north into Dutchess County. The Harlem Valley rail line and north-south highway routes connect commuters to major employment centers to the south.

The regional housing market and plans to extend the rail line north to Wassaucott will likely continue to stimulate long-term growth in the eastern part of the county. The scenic beauty of Dover's undeveloped land is attractive to new homeowners or city dwellers looking for a second home in the country. The rural environment that makes Dover a desirable place to live is increasingly vulnerable to change under these circumstances.

Importance of a Master Plan

In the distant past communities were established without master plans, review boards, or strict regulatory controls. The historic hamlets, farm complexes, and rural roads that remain from this unregulated era of initial development are now admired for their unique, yet harmonious visual qualities. Why then are master plans necessary?

Modern development involves rapid changes in technology and building materials. Worldwide communication has expanded and population mobility has been greatly enhanced. Out-of-state developers and architects with imported ideas are common. One major housing project can dramatically increase a town's population, creating significant impacts on traffic, schools and other local services. Community standards which were once

passed down through generations among a smaller network of families and moderated by the slower pace of change, must now be defined and protected by the democratically elected local government that represents and ever-changing population.

A master plan is a public review process that defines what is important to the community. By carefully examining current conditions and problems in the context of broad citizen involvement, rationally justifiable recommendations for future action can be established. Its purpose is to guide change to be consistent with community objectives. Those objectives will be expressed in the form of policy statements that represent the general desires of the Town's residents. Those policies that can be graphically portrayed will be included on the plan maps. The plan considers major public policy issues in such critical areas as land use, transportation, community facilities and housing. This plan identifies important elements of the Town's natural and built environment and provides policies intended to preserve that environment, while supporting growth that is compatible with community standards.

A comprehensive plan for Dover was first developed in 1966. That plan was a statement of policy based on assumptions and conditions that existed at that time. Major changes have occurred in Dover and Dutchess County in the past 26 years. Furthermore, societal changes affecting family size, household composition, the cost of housing, work habits and development patterns all have land use implications that need to be addressed by Dover residents.

The Planning Process

A committee of Dover residents including members of the Planning Board and Conservation Advisory Commission were appointed to develop this document. Planners from the Dutchess County Department of Planning worked with the Master Plan Committee to clarify issues and prepare draft material for comments and approval. An important beginning step was the distribution of a Community Values Survey to solicit opinions from residents on a variety of current topics. An early public workshop was also held to announce the results of the survey and solicit ideas and opinions from interested residents. From the results of the survey, preliminary goals and objectives for the planning process were outlined and then tested against the facts that emerged in the preparation of the background chapters.

Decisions on the wording in the text, plan recommendations, and land use maps were, whenever possible, achieved by consensus to ensure the broadest possible agreement among the committee members. The draft plan was presented to town officials twice, to residents at three public meetings, and revisions made in response to public comments. The entire process, plan recommendations and implementation methods will be summarized in Chapter Nine.